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Focus on hung parliament

Kinnock offers PR bait to floating voters

By Philip Webster and Robin Oakley

NEIL Kinnock and John Major engaged in a tug-of-war for Liberal Democrat and floating voters yesterday as all three party leaders were forced to face up to the prospect of a hung parliament for the first time.

After Mr Major's warning to Liberal Democrat supporters that a vote for Paddy Ashdown would let in Labour, Mr Kinnock attempted to woo them by promising to broaden Labour's electoral appeal.

In a move that may put pressure on Mr Ashdown to sustain a minority Labour government if Thursday's election results in a hung parliament, the Labour leader also offered the Liberal Democrats and others a place at the negotiating table in discussions over whether Britain should have a new electoral system. Mr Kinnock pledged to build the widest possible support round his programme for government but he stopped well short of Mr Ashdown's demand for immediate legislation on proportional representation and

the prime minister rejected it altogether.

Mr Kinnock was quickly rebutted by the Liberal Democrat leader, who declared that he was "wobbling on the fence" and had to come down on one side or the other. Believing that both parties will try to go it alone if they form minority governments, Mr Ashdown appealed to Conservative and Labour voters to put pressure on their leaders so that they will do a deal with the Liberal Democrats in a hung parliament.

As Mr Kinnock appeared to be opening the door to a change in the voting system, the prime minister reiterated that there were "no circumstances" in which he would introduce proportional representation. He said governments would be unable to take firm decisions. "You are in a perpetual state of campaigning, backstairs deals and trying to cobble together majorities for individual pieces of policy."

Mr Ashdown said that the clear option poll support for coalition would force the two main parties to deal in a hung parliament because the two leaders would fear a public backlash in a second election if they refused. The Liberal Democrat leader said that Mr Kinnock had merely "shuffled a bit on the fence" and he had to say yes or no to PR before polling day. Speaking in Turkey, Mr Ashdown said: "What we got from Mr Kinnock this morning is not a decision, it's a fudge. It's de-

signed to confuse people, it's designed to hint, to nudge, to suggest."

However, politicians in all parties question whether Mr Ashdown would carry out his threat to bring down a Labour government after it had promised a step in the direction of reform. Mr Kinnock's intervention, on a day when 98 per cent of his parliamentary candidates were appearing at events to mark Charter 88's "democracy day", was a clear attempt to win over what one aide called "the two-thirds of the population who are not dyed-in-the-wool Tory supporters".

In carefully couched conciliatory language he said that, although Labour would win an overall majority, he believed it would be swelled in the Commons by MPs from other parties who backed Labour's policies for recovery, health and education. Labour was, he said, looking to "lead by consensus", winning broad appeal for sensible policies. Asked whether he was bridge-building, Mr Kinnock replied: "Neither bridges, nor ditches."

Both the Labour leader and Mr Major insisted, as they have to, that there will be no hung parliament and that they will win outright victory. Labour is making plain that if it is the largest party in a hung parliament, there will be no negotiations with third parties. He put forward a programme and effectively challenge the other parties to vote him down. His decision to offer other parties some involvement in reform discussions may, however, make it more difficult for Mr Ashdown to do that.

Labour's manifesto makes plain that its Plan enquiry into voting systems, which has already recommended PR for the proposed Scottish parliament, will be upgraded to a commission "with an extended membership and enhanced authority". Mr Kinnock went further yesterday. Continued on page 20, col 3

Election 92, pages 9-13
Peter Riddell and Diary, page 16
Leading article and letters, page 17

Doubts still cloud Labour spending

By Nicholas Wood, Political Correspondent

FRESH doubts were raised yesterday over Labour's ability to fund existing public spending plans after John Smith backed away from earlier pledges to accept some £9.5 billion the government has earmarked from future sales of state assets.

The shadow chancellor contradicted Neil Kinnock by saying that Labour had not decided whether to order sales of the remaining 20 per cent state holding in BT and the 40 per cent stake in the two power generating companies. Mr Smith's intervention came after Mr Kinnock had indicated repeatedly that Labour intended to use the

proceeds of these sales for public spending.

On Monday, Mr Kinnock said in a *Panorama* interview that Labour was "at par" with the Conservatives over future privatisation revenues. On Wednesday, in reply to a direct question about the three companies, he said that a Labour government would have "whatever resources are available to a Conservative government".

But yesterday the Labour leader clouded the picture when asked if he would sell off the state holdings in BT, National Power and PowerGen. "I didn't say that we would

Continued on page 20, col 6



Stepping up: France's new prime minister, Pierre Bérégovoy, facing the press in Paris yesterday after he was named to succeed the ousted Edith Cresson. The former finance minister promised that tackling unemployment would top his agenda. Details, page 14; leading article, page 17

Titanic's rockets ignored

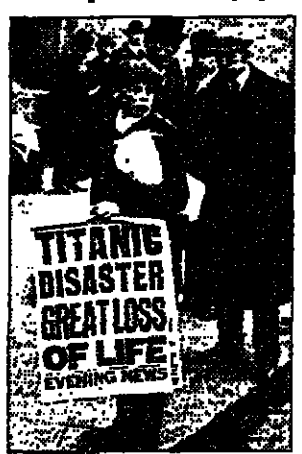
By Michael Horsnell

THE distress rockets fired by the Titanic on the night of April 14, 1912 after she hit an iceberg on her maiden voyage were ignored by the British cargo ship Californian, a report by the marine accident investigation branch of the transport department said yesterday.

But even if Stanley Lord, master of the Californian, had taken "proper action" and steamed at full speed through the ice to the stricken liner he would not have been in time to save any of the 1,490 lives lost because he was probably 18 miles away. The investigation, ordered by the former transport secretary Cecil Parkinson after the wreck of the Titanic was discovered in 1985, continues to shroud in mystery the part played by Lord, however.

The report says that there were "no villains in this story" — just human beings with human characteristics.

Captain blamed, page 5



Tripoli mobs vent fury on embassies

By Christopher Walker in Cairo and Michael Binyon, Diplomatic Editor

MOBS in Tripoli went on the rampage yesterday in diplomatic enclaves, attacking some embassies that were involved in the United Nations vote to apply sanctions against Libya, and holding noisy protests outside others, including that housing the small British interests section.

European diplomats, contacted by telephone, said that much of the violence appeared to have been orchestrated by the government of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, but there was also an element of spontaneity in the riots, reflecting resentment against what are seen as Western double standards towards Arabs as opposed to Israel.

The worst hit embassy was that of Venezuela, which held the presidency of the United Nations Security Council when the sanctions vote was passed on Tuesday. A mob of about 200 people attacked the building, setting fire to parts of the interior. They also destroyed files, furniture, telex machines and

the private apartment of a resident councillor.

A crowd of 100 people who surrounded the Austrian embassy was confronted by Wilfried Almoschler, the Austrian ambassador in Libya, who persuaded them to disperse. "I had just come back from the Venezuelan embassy, which was completely burnt out," he said in a telephone interview. "I saw this crowd around the building, and some people throwing stones."

The leader came up to me and read out a declaration, accusing Austria of siding with the United States against Libya. He said all Austrian firms must leave the country. I managed to calm him, and told him that Austria was not an enemy of Libya. They were mainly young — students perhaps — and went away after a while. The real damage is to the Venezuelans. Two cars were

Continued on page 20, col 8

Arabs fear spillover, page 15

Dapper Don convicted

By Our Foreign Staff

JOHN GOTTI, the alleged leader of the mafia in New York, was convicted yesterday of murder and racketeering after a 10-week trial in which his right-hand man gave evidence against him.

As the forewoman of the jury read the verdict Gotti, known as the Dapper Don, showed no reaction. The verdict ended the government's

six-year crusade to topple America's most notorious crime boss.

Gotti, aged 51, faces life in prison; other counts against him and against co-defendant Frank "Frankie Locs" Locascio, aged 59, were still being read. Salvatore "Sammy Bull" Gravano, Gotti's right-hand man was the key prosecution witness.

The judge's action was condemned by Madeline Colvin, a legal officer with the National Council for Civil Liberties. "This is a disgraceful example of a judge abusing his power and the Lord Chancellor should immediately investigate how this happened. It is outrageous to interpret the cheering of an acquittal as a contempt of court," she said.

Jailing the men, the judge, accused them of "a most unseemly outburst of shouting". He told them he had exercised his powers to detain them and could have imposed a heavier sentence for the "disgraceful" episode. "It has not been possible to establish positively what part each of you played, but it is absolutely plain that you were closely associated with those who have admitted the outburst." It was so loud and sustained it visibly shocked some members of the jury.

A night in jail for twelve good friends and true

Paul Wilkinson

TWELVE men were not amused when, after turning up at court to support a friend in the dock, found they would be spending the night in custody for contempt of court rather than spending it celebrating.

Judge Angus MacDonald, aged 60, who spent 22 years in East Africa, first as resident magistrate in the colony of Nyasaland and then as Crown Council when the country became independent Malawi, took exception to the young men's cheers of pleasure when the jury at Newcastle upon Tyne Crown Court found John Barclay, aged 24, not guilty of wounding two men in a brawl outside a Chinese restaurant last summer. His friends found themselves herded into the very dock their friend had quit only moments before to face the irate judge. And when his questions

produced only a limited response he consigned them all to cells for the night.

Ten of the group, aged in their teens and early twenties found themselves inside Durham high security prison, home to some of the country's most dangerous convicts. Only two were found less forbidding lodgings at the Low Newton remand centre in Northumberland. After a night in custody they were brought back to court yesterday to make formal apologies.

Now at least one of them is taking legal advice on compensation. Lee Gilholm, aged 19, of Westerhope, Newcastle, claims he was not even in the public gallery at the time of the acquittal. "I was standing outside the court when I heard the noise and the rest of the lads piled out. A policeman ordered us all back in because the judge wanted to see us."

He claimed he was refused permission to tell his family what had happened or to call a solicitor. "I am furious about my treatment and determined to take action against the judge. I got nothing to eat, just a cup of tea. I wasn't allowed any phone calls and I asked repeatedly to see a solicitor but was told it was not possible."

Another of the men, Tony Davison, aged 21, said: "It was terrible. We were all in different cells. We couldn't believe it when we were carted off to prison, just for cheering when our friend was cleared."

"Some of us left out of our seats and cheered. It was an automatic reaction of relief and emotion."

"The judge called everyone down and put them in the dock. He asked who had cheered and some said they had while others said they hadn't. Then he locked all of us up."

THE TIMES: A TRUE NATIONAL SERVICE

1642: THE NATION DIVIDES



We know about the French revolution, but what of England's? What did the cavaliers and roundheads achieve by going to war 350 years ago? Tomorrow, we assess the effects on the national psyche and detail the many events marking the anniversary. These include a travelling exhibition sponsored by The Times: we offer a foretaste on page 20

1992: THE NATION DECIDES



As the battle for Number 10 intensifies, The Times continues to bring the most informed reports and analysis. On polling day, an eight-page supplement tells voters everything they need to know about the campaign and the candidates and for all the results and portraits of the new MPs. Look out for Saturday's 16-page election special

A NATIONAL INSTITUTION...



Tomorrow afternoon, 40 horses gallop off in racing's most gruelling contest. Some will fall, some give up, some may even die. Yet a former winner suggests tomorrow that the race has gone soft. We will also bring a map of the course plus a colour guide to all the runners and riders

...AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST



Every day, The Times offers the best of British writing. Today, Bernard Levin marvels at a man who lost both arms; Valerie Grove meets Mr Election and Alan Coren rejoices in becoming a pollster's target. Further proof, if it were needed, that The Times is always essential reading

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INDEX

Births, marriages, deaths	18
Crossword	20
Letters	17
Obituaries	19
Sport	32-36
Weather	20
LIFE & TIMES	
Arts	2,3
Concise Crossword	9
Health	4
Law Report	8
Motoring	7
TV & radio	10



Sinn Fein canvasser is murdered by Loyalists

BY EDWARD GORMAN, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A SINN FEIN election canvasser was shot dead yesterday by Loyalist gunmen who claimed that he was a local IRA commander.

The shooting of Danny Cassidy by the Ulster Freedom Fighters came hours after a separate Loyalist group murdered one of its own members, saying that he was engaged in acts of "treason". This was seen as indicating that his killers thought he was working as an informer.

Mr Cassidy, a married man in his thirties, was sitting in the driver's seat of his car in the village of Killybegs in Co Londonderry, when he was shot through the window, when masked gunmen drew up

alongside. Police said he was shot from inside the adjoining car. The man to whom he was talking escaped unhurt.

Mr Cassidy was working as an election canvasser for Pauline Davey-Kennedy, a Sinn Fein councillor and candidate in East Londonderry, a seat held by Willie Ross of the Ulster Unionist party. Ms Davey-Kennedy is the daughter of John Davey, a previous election candidate in the constituency and a Sinn Fein councillor in nearby Magherafelt, who was murdered by Loyalists in February 1989.

Mr Cassidy's death is the latest in a series of attacks on members of Sinn Fein by the UFF, a cover name for the legal Ulster Defence Association, which has now killed five party members in 11 months.

Last night, Sinn Fein played down speculation that Mr Cassidy's death might be related to the election or his role as a canvasser. Richard McCauley, the party's main spokesman in Belfast, said Mr Cassidy's murder had to be viewed against the backdrop of the campaign against Sinn Fein by British ministers and Unionist politicians.

Mr Cassidy's death, the 40th in Northern Ireland this year, came hours after Peter McClements, a father of two aged 43, was shot by the other main Loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Volunteer Force, at Lurgan in Co Armagh. He was killed by a gunman who waited for him to return home, chased him up the driveway and shot him twice.

The UVF, in a call to the BBC in Belfast, claimed that Mr McClements was one of its members who was guilty of treason, suggesting that they thought he was acting as an informer either for police or for Republicans.



Wintry walk: a pupil heading for school near Kirkstone Pass, Cumbria, after overnight snow left many roads in the county impassable only with care yesterday. Heavy rain caused flooding in northern

England and parts of Scotland, and many areas are expected to see gales, fog, snow, sleet and floods tomorrow (David Young writes). Drier and brighter weather will arrive by the end of the

weekend, but many areas will remain cold. The Meteorological Office said. Northern Electric said yesterday that 17,000 homes had been blacked out overnight. All but 500 had their supplies re-

stored by midday. The most serious problem caused by heavy rain was a landslide which closed the A1 north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Many people had to be evacuated from their homes in Morpeth.

Rothbury and Ponteland. The rain in the North-East is expected to have little effect on overall national water reserves, with areas of East Anglia, Kent and Surrey threatened with drought this year.

TV-am and Virgin win radio bid

By MELINDA WITTSTOCK, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

TV-AM and Virgin, losers in last autumn's TV bid, won the battle for Britain's second independent national radio licence in spite of bidding less than half the £4 million top offer.

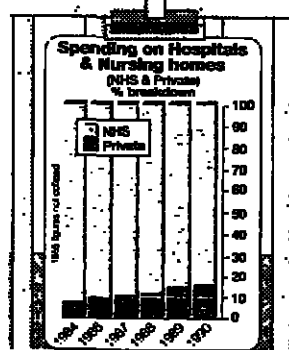
The Radio Authority rejected as unsuitable the highest offer for the rock and pop station's eight-year licence from Independent National Broadcasting Company, a consortium of Sheffield businessmen and former radio executives.

Independent Music Radio, the 50-50 Virgin and TV-am venture, bid £1.88 million to provide listeners with a broad-based album rock and chart music format.

Health and medical insurance Private sector is booming

By JEREMY LAURANCE

PRIVATE health and residential care is proving to be one of the most recession-proof businesses of the early 1990s, fuelled by a combination of a contracting public sector and booming demand. Spending on private medical insurance exceeded £1 billion for the first time in 1990, 15 per cent up on 1989, according to figures published today in *Lain's Review of Private Healthcare*. The number of insured subscribers grew by 7 per cent, with 6.6 million people, 11.7 per cent of the population, now covered. Substantial price increases



in 1991 halted the increase in subscribers, but spending is estimated to have risen by a further 15 per cent.

Hospital consultants have shared in the boom. Fees paid to the 12,000 who do some private practice averaged £40,000 in 1990, on top of NHS salaries, then ranging from £32,000 to £86,000.

Spending on private nursing and residential homes for the elderly has grown even more sharply, by 26 per cent in the year to March 1991. Seven out of ten residents of private homes are now paid for by the state. The numbers claiming income support rose 22 per cent last year to 231,000, and the average income support payment increased from £129 to £156.

The growth of private nursing homes and the closure of NHS geriatric beds are the principal factors shifting the balance of provision of health care.

The number of patients waiting over two years for treatment was cut by almost 97 per cent in the year to 31 March, according to provisional figures released yesterday by the health department. But 1,640 patients still remained to be treated, cheating the government of its goal of clearing the two year lists by 1 April.

Health authorities have been engaged in a scramble to clear their two-year lists since William Waldegrave, the health secretary, gave notice earlier this year that every region would be expected to meet the target, set out in the patient's charter. The challenge has proved too much for three regions, North West Thames (788 still waiting), West Midlands (177) and South East Thames (97). The remaining 11 regions all have fewer than 25 patients still waiting, and four have none.

Two thirds of people are satisfied "with the way in which the NHS runs nowadays" and fewer than one fifth are dissatisfied, according to a survey commissioned by the independent Kings Fund Institute. The institute warns, however, that the findings must be interpreted with caution.

Minimum funding urged for schools

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

AN alliance of teachers and parents yesterday demanded a minimum level of funding for every state school, as a growing number of education authorities began to implement budget cuts.

In the last fortnight alone, parents at six schools have notified the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations of requests for more money to maintain existing staffing levels.

Margaret Morrissey, who chairs the confederation, said: "We believe in an excellent state education system for every child and not just the ones whose parents can afford it."

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said that many local authorities faced dire financial prospects. They were struggling to cope with rising pupil numbers, trying to keep class sizes down and facing additional demands from the national curriculum.

Doug McAvey, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, which hosted a London news conference, added that £3 billion was needed to teach the new curriculum adequately.

Independent reports commissioned by the union estimated that the new curriculum required 20,000 more teachers in primary schools and 17,500 in secondary schools.

Mr McAvey argued that the minimum requirements of each school should be assessed on the basis of its size. No government could guarantee proper levels of funding immediately, but a new system should be phased in over an agreed period.

"We now have a national curriculum, a national system of testing. How can we deny national minimum standards of resources to pay for that national curriculum?" he asked.

Schools in Newcastle upon Tyne faced 6 per cent cuts and were being forced to

make 80 teachers and 40 non-teaching staff redundant, Mr Hart said. In Avon, schools had been told to find savings of £1.5 million to fund the teachers' pay award. Similar cuts were being implemented all over the country.

Mrs Morrissey said: "Parents are telling us every day that they are having to pay up to £100 per child into school budgets. We have yet to see the effect on relationships between those who can afford to pay and those who cannot."

Mr Hart said that there was an urgent need for a fundamental review of the way state education is funded. Although school repairs were essential, top priority had to be given to the recruitment and retention of top quality teachers to meet the demands of the national curriculum.

The financial difficulties of local authorities had been exacerbated by the government's failure to provide full funding for the teachers' pay increase of 7.8 per cent, Mr Hart added.

Schools all over the country were facing deficits, which could only be wiped out by cutting staff or reducing spending on books and equipment.



Hart: "councils face dire struggle"

Drinking driver avoids ban

A man caught driving while almost twice over the alcohol limit has escaped being banned after a Scottish court was told that disqualification could affect his son's place at a private school. An appeal may be lodged by the procurator fiscal's department.

The man, who cannot be named, was fined £350 and given four penalty points by Aberdeen sheriff court.

The driver appeared before the court earlier this week and admitted drinking and driving. In mitigation his lawyer said that if he lost his licence he would lose his job. This in turn would affect his son's education at a £4,000-a-year private school.

Sheriff Rosie Morrison said that there were "special reasons" for not imposing the usual driving ban and substituted a fine.

£3m deal lost

A Portuguese firm, Indep, has beaten Royal Ordnance to win a £3 million contract to supply the British Army with 16 million rounds of ammunition. The ammunition would have been made by the British company's factory at Radway Green, Cheshire, which employs about 1,000 workers. Royal Ordnance said it had won two other army contracts, for 5.56mm blanks and tracer bullets.

Comedian ill

The comedian Frankie Howerd was in intensive care last night after being admitted to hospital for heart and lung tests. Mr Howerd, aged 70, was taken to the Harley Street Clinic in London after difficulty breathing. Mr Howerd, who has found a new generation of young admirers on the alternative comedy circuit, is due this summer to work on *Carry on Columbus*, the 30th in the Carry On film series.

Life sentence

Danny Gardiner, aged 32, a decorator of Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, was jailed for life yesterday after being found guilty of murdering Alan "Chalkie" White, whose body was found in a lake at the Cotswold Water Park, Gloucestershire, in 1989. He had been due to testify about Gardiner's alleged part in a robbery.

Airmen escape

The pilot and the crewman of an American F-111 bomber ejected to safety yesterday as it crashed into a field near its base at RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire, sending wreckage into a factory car park, damaging 15 cars. No one was hurt. The crew ejected in the cockpit capsule of the aircraft, which appeared to develop engine trouble soon after take-off, and were picked up a mile from the wreckage.

Times award

The Times has won a commendation for design in the Newspaper Industry Awards, organised by Newspaper Forum, the industry's magazine. The judges said that they were "impressed with the determined manner in which The Times is seeking to resume its historic mantle of authority". The Sunday Times won an award for the excellence of web offset presswork on its Review section.

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Union tells actors not to sign Costa soap contracts

By MELINDA WITTSTOCK, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH actors have threatened to boycott BBC's new £10 million Spanish soap opera *El Dorado*, which is intended to boost the channel's ratings this autumn.

Equity, the actors' union, yesterday instructed all British agents and actors not to sign contracts for the soap, which is scheduled to begin production in the mountains above Marbella next month. It is the first time a British soap will be shot entirely on a foreign location, and the union is angry that the BBC has left it powerless by not applying British production agreements.

The 30-strong cast — whether British, Swedish, German, Italian, French or Spanish — will be offered Spanish contracts with no residual repeat fees. Casting has already begun and the first contracts have been

sent out this week. None has yet been signed. *El Dorado*, devised by *EastEnders* creator Julia Smith and previously known as *Little England*, will be broadcast three times a week in the slot vacated by Terry Wogan's chat show.

Ian McGarry, general secretary of Equity, said: "The last thing we want to do is to stop this important new series but we cannot agree that our members should be working on less favourable terms than if they were here, and in the absence of any financial guarantees."

He also accused the BBC of "secrecy and evasion". The BBC denied suggestions that Ms Smith and Verity Lambert, an independent producer, were subcontracting production to a Spanish company, J&B Productions, to avoid British agreements. "Equity's nose is out of joint because

it isn't involved in it," a BBC spokesman said. "There is no evidence of a boycott. Actors are not going out there with arms up their backs; they want to be involved in a very exciting project."

Actors are being offered contracts requiring them to work 48 hours a week, 46 weeks a year, with up to 12 hours filming each day. This will exclude travel, make-up time and meals. The BBC said that under Spanish Equity arrangements, actors would be paid according to age and experience.

The soap's 25-acre site in the mountain village of Coin, fully operational from May, is three times as big as the Albert Square set in *EastEnders*. Its construction has provoked environmental protests in Spain, after a large part of a pine forest was cleared to make way for it.

Killers who shot boy in the back jailed for life

BY RAY CLANCY

TWO men who shot dead a teenager after ordering him to lie face down on the floor while they robbed a petrol station were yesterday jailed for life.

Jamil Chowdhary and Mohammed Nazir were guilty of the "brutal, senseless and horrifying murder of an innocent young man", Mr Justice Phillips told Winchester Crown Court.

Their victim, Raymond Kelly, aged 17, was hit in the back by a blast from a sawn-off shotgun. Moments before, he lay beside his friend on the floor, he said. "I'm gonna get shot. I'm gonna get shot."

The killers stole £70 in the raid at the Phoenix Green filling station on the A30 at Hartley Wintney, Hampshire, in February last year. Matthew Pollock, who had asked Raymond to accompany him to the petrol station to keep the owner's daughter Sophie Ashworth, aged 19, company as she manned the cashier desk, had also been ordered to lie down on the floor.

Mr Pollock, aged 18, said that he and Raymond were terrified. He told how he heard his friend whisper that he was going to be fired at. He said that he saw the gun coming towards them and then heard a bang. The next thing he saw was the feathers from Raymond's body warmer rising into the air.

Chowdhary and Nazir ran off after taking the money from the till but they had been captured on a security camera. The film showed Nazir, with a scarf around his face,

entering and selecting a drink. As he went to the counter to pay, Chowdhary entered carrying a sawn-off shotgun and ordered the boys to get on the floor. Nazir demanded the cash and Chowdhary shot Raymond in the back, holding the gun inches from the boy's body.

Both men denied murder. Chowdhary, aged 25, of Reading, was also jailed for 12 years, to run concurrently, for robbery, which he had denied, and Nazir, aged 21, of no fixed address, was sentenced to ten years for the same offence, which he had admitted, also to run concurrently.

Throughout the trial the prosecution argued that both men were responsible for the murder because they had planned and carried it out together. David Elfer, QC, for the crown, had told the court that Nazir had returned home after the shooting and went to the bathroom saying that he had shot a boy. He might not have pulled the trigger but his self-identification at home made him just as responsible.

Anthony Hacking, QC, counsel for Chowdhary, told the judge there was evidence that both men had been taking drugs and that partly explained why they were involved in such "a wanton act" and had reacted in such a cool manner to the events. He said Chowdhary and Nazir had first met during community service imposed by a court some years before.

The pair had become friends and then partners in crime. The friendship deteriorated after the raid. Nazir, on remand in jail for another offence, decided to tell the police that Chowdhary had committed the murder because his former best friend had taken his girlfriend. He then found himself charged as well.

Raymond's parents, twin brother David and Mr Pollock were in court when the verdict was announced. Afterwards they said that they hoped the men would never be released. "I lost my best friend who I loved dearly. Prison for life is just too soft for what they did," Mr Pollock said. Annette Kelly said she still felt bitter about her son's death. "I feel we have been inflicted with a life sentence as a family. We have got to try and get back to some sort of normal life."

Superintendent Peter Long, who led the investigation into the murder, said that it was one of the most heart-breaking killings he had dealt with. "It was a totally unnecessary expenditure of life for a very selfish purpose. This robbery could have been committed without such undue violence."



Hands-on boss: Phyllis Cunningham, centre, chief executive of Royal Marsden hospital, is congratulated by two of the nursing staff after receiving the Business Woman of the Year award in London yesterday (Alison Roberts writes). Miss Cunningham, aged 54, pictured with Sister Laura Hitchcock, left, and staff nurse

Assumpta O'Callaghan, was the first woman from the public sector to win the Veuve Clicquot title. Past holders include Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop, and Prue Leith, who owns a company and restaurants group. Miss Cunningham is in charge of 2,000 staff and a £60 million budget at Britain's leading cancer hospital. She has elimi-

nated a £2 million deficit in two years and maintained the number of patients treated and the level of research, development and teaching. She launched a £25 million appeal for extensions to the hospital's sites in London and Surrey, and set up a self-funding secretarial agency to provide the Marsden and other London hospitals with staff

at a lower cost than outside agencies. After receiving the award at Claridge's from Barbara Mills, QC, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Miss Cunningham said: "Perhaps people have recognised that running an organisation in the public sector is the same as running one in the private sector. I think women are very good organisers."

Brittany farm dispute

Onion lorry gets through

FROM PETER VICTOR IN BREST

THE Turkish onions grown by a British company arrived safely in the shallow-growing capital of France yesterday, to the quiet chagrin of Brittany's farmers.

After action by the British and French governments, there was no sign of the violence threatened by French farmers against Davex, the British import and export firm behind the cargo, or its lorry. After a journey of 3,800km lasting six days, Nazim Ugar, the Turkish driver, climbed from the cab of his 40ft-long rig at the company packing depot in Plouneour Trez, Brittany.

The last 16km of the journey had been as part of a convoy. Leaving customs in the port of Brest early yesterday morning, he followed François Maze, the owner of the plant. Behind them were caravans of journalists and a police escort.

At one point Mr Ugar stopped when he was separated from M Maze's car by a camera crew from Yorkshire Television. A French television crew later swerved into the path of the lorry. French motorists and farmers looked on incredulously.

There were no brass bands or flags to welcome the convoy but some enterprising journalists had brought Union flags with them and Mr Ugar was happy to hoist

one aloft for the cameras while standing on a pile of shallots.

M Maze immediately set about unloading the onions and resuming his business, which has been almost at a standstill for the past week. "The farmers from the district didn't cause us any trouble this time," he said. "I just want to get on with the work now so we can win back the order and goodwill that we have lost while this has been going on." Another load is expected today and M Maze said he hoped and expected that the journey would go as smoothly.

The general view in Brit-



Maze with Turkish shallots in right hand, and French ones in left

ny was that the farmers had now lost the desire to fight in the face of criticism in the local as well as British press. *Le Télégramme*, a Breton broadsheet, reported yesterday that the local farming cooperative had been stockpiling shallots to push up prices.

Dominique Begoc, representing the farmers opposing the imports, was not available for comment.

In Plouneour Trez's bars, English journalists who had travelled with the onions were scrutinised and became the subject of quiet muttering, but no one wished to be interviewed on the matter. One said that he expected no further action.

Peter Davis, managing director of Davex, said yesterday that the shipment represented a coup for Britain. "The militant farmers have disbanded themselves," he said. "The combination of press attention and diplomatic pressure has forced the French authorities to take action."

Davex has hundreds of thousands of pounds tied up in the onion-growing operation in Turkey and stands to lose up to £2 million if its export plans fail. The company built a cold store in Turkey to protect its crops and, for the past two years, has been doing dummy runs to France.

Retrial ordered in robbery case

BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A RETRIAL was ordered by the Court of Appeal yesterday for a man convicted of armed robbery and burglary after a trial involving evidence from detectives in the disbanded West Midlands serious crimes squad.

In the latest of a series of appeals following allegations of misconduct by members of the squad, Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice and two other appeal judges ruled the convictions of George Glen Lewis, aged 26, of Wolverhampton, were unsatisfactory and ordered a retrial because of doubts over the reliability of two former squad members. Lewis, given a ten-year jail sentence in 1987 at Wolverhampton, will now be tried at Nottingham.

Lewis, who remains in custody, was refused an appeal in 1988. His case was reopened after the disbanding of the squad and an investigation by West Yorkshire Police.

He was jailed in 1987 for armed attacks on a supermarket manager and staff at a local rent office, and burglary at a maisonette. Members of the serious crimes squad who arrested Lewis and conducted the first interviews later figured in police disciplinary proceedings after their conduct in another case that collapsed at trial.

Lord Lane said the officers, Det Sgt Peter Reynolds and Det Con John Perkins, were found in that case to have

falsified statements. As far as credibility was concerned, it was as if a charge of perjury had been levelled and proved against each of them. He said that had jurors in Lewis's trial known this, they might have doubted the reliability of the prosecution case. Lord Lane said that the length of time that had elapsed since the offences was not a bar to a new trial.

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'Gay' may not be libellous, jury told

BY LIN JENKINS

THE judge in the Jason Donovan libel case told the jury yesterday that to call a man a homosexual might not be defamatory, but to call him a liar and a hypocrite clearly would be.

Mr Justice Drake said they must decide how ordinary, level-headed readers of the article complained about in *The Face* magazine would have understood it.

Mr Donovan, aged 23, an Australian pop singer and actor, is suing for libel, alleging that the article implied he was gay and a hypocrite lying about his sexual preference.

The *Face*'s publishers, Nicholas Logan and Ben Summerskill, a freelance writer, deny libel and maintain the article was about the "outing" campaign in London to identify publicly homosexuals who kept their homosexuality secret. They agree that Mr Donovan is not homosexual and say the photo and the story were not targeted at his sexuality.

The judge, summing up, said that Mr Donovan's complaint was not that the article was defamatory because it accused him of being a homosexual, but that it suggested he was and denied it therefore making him "two-faced, a liar, a hypocrite".

The defendants' case was that the article was about "outing" which referred to Mr Donovan because he had

been picked as the first victim of the UK campaign. They claimed that the photograph complained of, which pictured him wearing a tee-shirt with "Queer as F***" written on it, was clearly fake.

The judge said: "If you say someone is a homosexual and do not add that they have done it in circumstances which are illegal, it may not be defamatory. Whether it would make people think less of them would probably depend on the circumstances."

"If the article did call Mr Donovan a liar or a hypocrite, that would clearly be defamatory and would be calculated to lower him in people's eyes."

If the jury were to find for Mr Donovan damages should be sufficient to vindicate his character but should also be reasonable. "Don't think you have to fix sums with lots of noughts on the end because it is fashionable." Earlier, Charles Gray, QC for Mr Donovan, told the court that the evidence from *The Face* as to why it did not contact Mr Donovan before publication was "very unsatisfactory".

Gay rights activists picketed the court and sang the adapted version of Mr Donovan's hit song *Any Dream Will Do*, singing *Any Queen Will Do*, which the court had heard was now popular among homosexuals.

Wild cat attacks woman

BY RONALD FAIR

A BLACK panther-like creature which attacked a woman after crawling through a cat flap at her home in Hayfield, Derbyshire, is being hunted by police.

Kathleen Topliff was bitten on the hand after confronting the animal in the dining room and forcing it upstairs.

The incident came after sightings, dating back more than two years, of a black creature, two to three feet long, in the Hayfield area. Mrs Topliff, aged 68, was treated in hospital for shock. She had two stitches in an arm wound and anti-tetanus injections.

Mrs Topliff said: "It was some kind of wild cat and a very big one at that." When she confronted the animal it ran upstairs into a bedroom and hid under a bed. It sprang on to a wardrobe where it crouched, growling and spitting at her as she tried to drive it away with a broom handle.

The animal clawed her arm before running downstairs and escaping through a window. Mrs Topliff said the creature was very muscular and gave off a pungent smell. Her daughter, Denise White, said she believed that the creature had been in the house twice before looking for food because she had recognised the strong smell it left behind.

Highlanders give TV cool reception

BY KERRY GILL

FOR most of Britain, the advent of the television age was marked by the mass purchase of sets to watch the Queen's coronation in 1953. For 80 people living in a remote Highland Glen, it began with Paddy Ashdown leaping onto a stage amid a haze of dry ice.

After waiting 40 years for decent television reception it was perhaps unfortunate that instead of suffering screen snowstorms the people of Glen Elchaig and Loch Long should be bombarded with the general election. "Never mind," said Willie Nicolson, of Killilan, a hamlet at the top of the Glen, "a week from now and it will be all over. Then we can suffer the miseries of the soaps."

Residents in the Wester Ross area of the Highlands have had to put up with appalling or non-existent reception for years. Those living beside Loch Long fared better but, if there was not enough wind to drive the windmill providing electricity to a transmitter, or the tide was too high, there was the inevitable blizzard effect on screens.

Money from sources including the AF-Makoum family, local landowners, and the Skye and Lochalsh enterprise company, has paid for a new transmitter up the lochs and into Glen Elchaig which have brought the community

four-channel television. Four transmitters were necessary to ensure that each signal was carried in a straight line: "beaming" a signal around a mountain caused distortion.

Mr Nicolson said: "Some days the wind would drop and the windmill's blades stopped turning." High tides caused worse hitches. A rise in the sea level would distort signals leading to more "snowstorms".

The only way locals could enjoy programmes was to buy a video recorder and ask friends to post them cassettes. Mr Nicolson's children can now join in playground discussions about the latest trauma to have hit *Brookside* or *Neighbours*. He said that the novelty would take some time to wear off. "There are a lot of good programmes but a lot of rubbish too. Then there is the election..."

Angus McHattie, of Skye and Lochalsh enterprise, said: "Loch Long and Glen Elchaig are set in some of the most mountainous areas of the Highlands. Television reception was abominable. Part of our job is to improve the quality of life for people in our area. Whether *Neighbours* improves the quality of anyone's life is open to question but at least those in Glen Elchaig will have a chance to decide."

Drinking driver avoids ban

£3m deal lost

Comedian ill

Life sentence

Airmen escape

Times aware

Top unit trust awards- A to Z of winners



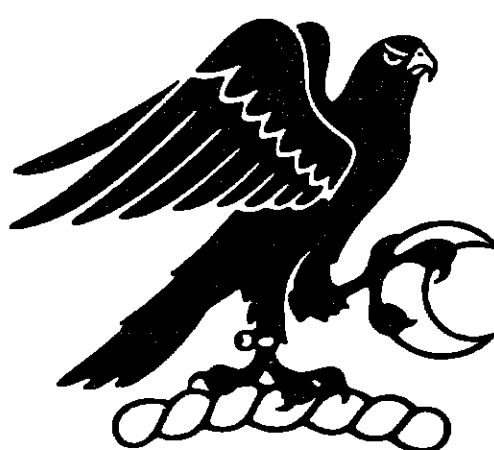
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Enquiry continues 80-year-old dispute by finding that quick action by cargo ship would not have saved lives

Captain blamed for ignoring distress flares from Titanic

THE master of a British cargo vessel failed to go to the rescue of the Titanic when the liner fired distress rockets after hitting an iceberg on April 14, 1912, a report for the transport department has found.

But even if Stanley Lord, master of the SS Californian and long regarded as the villain of the piece for failing to assist the Titanic, had got under way immediately, he would not have been able to save any of the 1,490 lives lost, the department's marine accident investigation branch says. The Californian would have arrived well after the liner had sunk, in 12,500ft of water on the fourth night of her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York, because the two ships were probably between 17 and 20 miles apart.

The report, by Peter Marriott, chief inspector of marine accidents, exonerates Lord on only two counts: that the ships were further apart than believed at the time and that, given the distance, it was unlikely that, even with abnormal refraction permitting sight beyond the visible horizon, the Californian could have seen the Titanic.

The nine-month re-examination of Lord's conduct undermines a 30-year campaign by his son and others to clear him of blame. However, the report says that opinions will remain divided and adds: "Neither party will be entirely satisfied with this report." Others would speculate further, but it was to be hoped they would do so with regard to the "simple fact that there are no villains in this story—just human beings with human characteristics".

Captain Marriott's conclusions clash with those of the inspector he originally appointed to consider the disaster. Captain Marriott said that, because of his disagreement with the findings of Thomas Barnett, a retired marine surveyor, he had

A fresh enquiry leaves opinion split on whether Stanley Lord was the villain he was painted, writes Michael Horsnell

commissioned a further examination by his deputy, James de Coverley, on which the final report was based.

The two studies contradict each other on the distance between the Californian and the Titanic at the time when the iceberg was hit. While Captain Barnett concluded that the Californian had been only five to seven miles off, Captain de Coverley estimated the most likely distance at 18 miles. Captain Marriott said that he endorsed his deputy's finding. None of the principals involved in producing the report was available for comment yesterday.

The re-examination of the files was ordered two years ago by Cecil Parkinson, then transport secretary, after parliament had twice rejected petitions which followed the discovery of the wreck of the Titanic, 13 miles from the position accepted by the original enquiry in 1912. That enquiry, chaired by Lord Mersey, had said that the Californian was only eight to ten miles away and "might have saved many, if not all, of the lives that were lost" if it had responded to the first distress rocket.

Captain Barnett, former principal nautical surveyor at the transport department, sifted a web of grid references, including a fix plotted by satellite when the Titanic's wreck was found by Robert Ballard, of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Massachusetts.

The report confirms Lord's belief that the Californian had been between 17 and 20 miles from the Titanic, but says that "distress signals were seen and proper action was not tak-

en". Instead, in response to radio distress signals, the Californian, which had stopped in ice, had gone off duty shortly before the first distress rocket was fired. When the Californian saw the distress rockets, it simply tried to make contact by Morse lamp but failed to get a response and took no further action.

The wireless operator of the Californian, which had stopped in ice, had gone off duty shortly before the first distress rocket was fired. When the Californian saw the distress rockets, it simply tried to make contact by Morse lamp but failed to get a response and took no further action.

It was twenty minutes before midnight on April 14, 1912, that ice holed the Titanic, despite the ship's attempt to avert collision. Lord said that his ship, bound for Boston from London with 47 passengers, had been 19 miles away and no one could possibly have seen the Titanic or her rockets.

Lord's defenders claim that the 1912 enquiry was looking for a scapegoat for the Titanic's scandalous lack of lifeboats and sacrificed the shipper to public opinion, rather than expose the Board of Trade or the Titanic's owner, White Star. Leslie Harrison, former general secretary of the Mercantile Marine Service Association, said that the latest report was ambiguous, although it cleared Lord of the main charge of blame. Mr Harrison has fought the case since Lord walked into the association's offices in Liverpool in 1958 and announced: "I'm Lord of the Californian. I have come to clear my name."

In 1962, Mr Harrison revealed unpublished memoirs by Henrik Nass, chief officer of a ship that may have been seen from the decks of the Titanic as distress rockets were fired. This produced evidence that it had not been the Californian but an unlicensed Norwegian seal hunter, the Samson, which thought it was under observation for illicit fishing and steamed away.

Mr Lord, aged 83, who still lives in his parents' home on Merseyside, added: "The innuendo was that he could have saved hundreds of lives, but slept while the Titanic sank. How frightful that must have been for a man who ran his ship like clockwork, the most thorough and meticulous of persons, and a teetotaler to boot. For three-quarters of a century, father has been portrayed as a liar and a drunkard, the baddie in a great drama."

Mr Lord said that his father had never brooded over the accusation or talked about it with his family. "It was a thing of the past, finished with until that book came out in the mid-1950s, *A Night to Remember*. The



Aftermath of disaster: billboards on the streets in 1912, top left, and an artist's impression of the sinking of Newfoundland, Stanley Lord, top right, skipper of the cargo ship SS Californian, was blamed by an enquiry and by the press, right, for allegedly failing to respond to the liner's distress signals. Yesterday's report says that, even if he had gone to the scene immediately, he could not have saved the 1,490 lives that were lost.

DAILY SKETCH.

THE PREMIER PICTURE PAPER. (Printed as a Supplement) ONE HALFPENNY.

THE BOAT THAT MIGHT HAVE SAVED ALL ON THE TITANIC.



An end to the innuendo satisfies son

STANLEY Lord, son of the Californian's captain, said yesterday that he was disappointed that his father had been only partly exonerated, but pleased that the report cleared him of blame for the loss of life.

Mr Lord, aged 83, who still lives in his parents' home on Merseyside, added: "The innuendo was that he could have saved hundreds of lives, but slept while the Titanic sank. How frightful that must have been for a man who ran his ship like clockwork, the most thorough and meticulous of persons, and a teetotaler to boot. For three-quarters of a century, father has been portrayed as a liar and a drunkard, the baddie in a great drama."

Mr Lord said that his father had never brooded over the accusation or talked about it with his family. "It was a thing of the past, finished with until that book came out in the mid-1950s, *A Night to Remember*. The

rubbish in that annoyed him and he set out to clear his name."

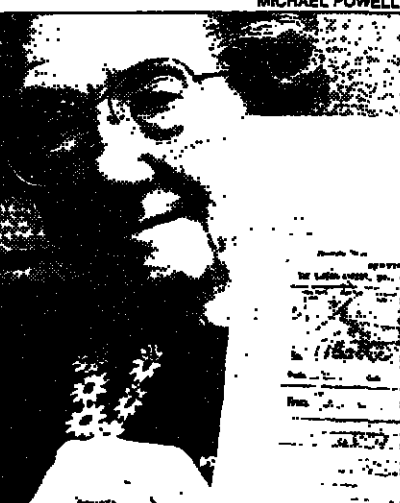
He added: "I know the report says he should have answered the distress signal, and he would have helped the Titanic passengers had he been close enough, but the Californian would never have got there in time."

Mr Lord, now aged 87, has refused to blame Lord for the loss of life. She said yesterday that she cannot be sure whether it was his ship she saw standing off, with lights blazing, well inside the horizon.

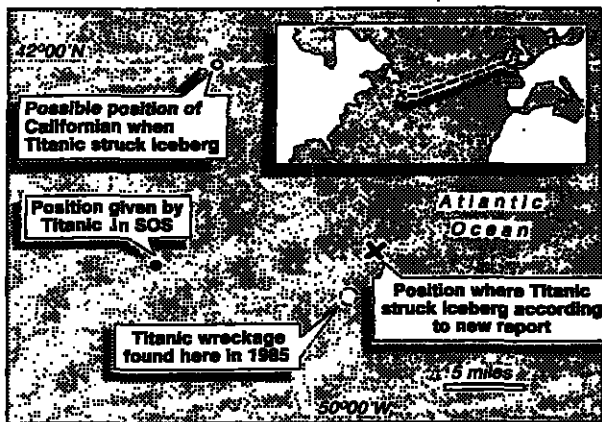
Benjamin Hart, aged 49, a master builder, was on his way to Winnipeg with his wife Esther, aged 50, and Eva, aged seven, to start a new business. Miss Hart remembers that he handed her to her mother in the lifeboat and spoke his last words to her: "Be a good girl and hold mummy's hand."

Miss Hart, who had been awoken in her cabin by her mother and carried on deck by her father, wrapped in a blanket, said: "I remember that my father stood back on the deck after he put me on the boat. I thought he was going to join us. I just cried when he did not. That is as vivid in my mind today as it was then when I was a girl of seven."

"What happened was too dreadful for words and it has been too dreadful all my life. But I have been a magistrate too long to go by innuendo. I have to opt for the truth and so I cannot blame Capt Lord."



Survivor: Eva Hart holding a Mayday message from the Titanic



BBC to pay damages to Whitehouse

THE BBC is to pay substantial undisclosed libel damages to Mary Whitehouse over remarks suggesting that she was a wicked woman who deliberately set out to whip up hatred against people.

Mr Justice Drake was told in the High Court yesterday that the remarks about Mrs Whitehouse, president of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, had been broadcast during a live discussion on Radio Four's Saturday morning satire programme *Loose Ends*.

The BBC, which will also pay legal costs, apologised to Mrs Whitehouse in court. It has already broadcast an apology.

Doctor accused

Dr Thomas Courtney, a gynaecologist who set up a foundation to help rape victims, was charged yesterday with sex offences against three women. Dr Courtney, aged 45, of North London, is already accused of rape and two indecent assaults.

Libel award

The former Welsh international rugby star Terry Holmes, aged 30, was awarded substantial libel damages in the High Court at Cardiff against Mirror Group Newspapers after a report linked him with a murdered shipping clerk.

Fitting return

Others have been seen on the banks of the river Otter in Devon for the first time in 20 years.

Art and the artist flourish in a royal celebration

THE royal family, although it has included two or three outstanding art collectors in the past, cannot be said to have maintained its reputation for connoisseurship since the days of Prince Albert. A book about the Queen and the arts a few years ago fell back increasingly on descriptions of the doings of "the Queen's Royal Academy" as though this institution were her personal responsibility.

In the circumstances, one would hardly expect Sovereign, the major summer show at the Victoria and Albert Museum celebrating the Queen's 40 years on the throne, to be strong in aesthetic terms. Yet the sections given over to "pure" art are undeniably impressive: a handful of major Leonardo drawings, for instance, would be a jewel in any company.

Although the Queen herself did not acquire them, it is clear that in her care the royal collection is not only being conserved with scholarly concern, but also occasionally being extended. The new acquisitions for the history collection are mostly of royal historical interest, but none the worse for that. It is fascinating to observe how recent studies, aided by x-ray photography, have established that under a portrait of Johann Christian Fischer by Gainsborough still survives the shadowy form of his long-lost portrait of Shakespeare. Perhaps the 11 contemporary paintings famously bought in 1960 to decorate a newly revamped suite of

John Russell Taylor finds much to enjoy at the V&A's show marking 40 years of the Queen's reign

rooms at Windsor could have been more enterprisingly chosen, but they do include a colourful picture by Alan Davie, *Throne of the Eye Goddess*, which is possibly the first abstraction to enter royal ownership. Near by, the Duke of Edinburgh is revealed in an unaccustomed light as the owner of a fine Lowry and an excellent 1957 Sutherland, *The Armillary Sphere*.

Elsewhere in the show, art does surface, even where it is not the main interest. There is the first Annigoni portrait, still probably the most distinguished of the reign. There is artwork for postage stamps, reminding us that during the Queen's reign design has been more varied and enterprising than ever in the history of British post.

There are examples of the royal table plate, the real stuff, scarred by knife and fork and laid out in a brilliant illusionist evocation of a state banquet. There are convincing reconstructions of private rooms at Sandringham, Balmoral and Windsor (right down to a "breathing" stuffed Corgi), and these are scattered with pictures and knick-knacks.

There is a slightly daunting selection of gifts from grateful subjects throughout the Commonwealth, which gives

added point to the Vancouver Sun cartoon in the Duke of Edinburgh's collection showing a train of porters unloading a royal aircraft of such spoils while a puzzled policeman asks: "But where in the bloody attic?"

Then, of course, there are the crown jewels, the coronation robes (unseen since 1953) and other grand accoutrements, some in replica but mostly original. The room devoted to the Queen's wardrobe is particularly vivid, demonstrating how such favoured designers as Norman Hartnell and Ian Thomas have managed to keep the royal appearance at once timely and timeless, although Hardy Amies does allow in a hint of the Swinging Sixties with a belt for the apricot dress and jacket he designed for the 1970 tour of Canada and Australia.

What emerges finally is what is no doubt intended to emerge: an image of the Queen as a dedicated worker who more than earns her keep. Even the section of royal sports features retrievers as well as corgis, and racing pigeons as well as race horses. Can the Queen be equally interested in them all, and in the art as well? No matter. She is there to be interested and to care for her heritage, which is also ours. And that, without doubt, she does.

Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 (071-938 8361). Monday to Saturday 10.00am-5.30pm, Sunday 12.50pm-5.30pm. Admission £6. Concessions £4.50.

Diary, page 16

Gun raids double in two years

By DAVID YOUNG

THE banking and insurance trade union called for a ban on replica guns yesterday after armed robberies almost doubled in two years.

The number of armed robberies rose to 1,633 last year, compared with 868 in 1989, according to the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union. Most vulnerable to attack were building society branches without bandit screens, the union said.

A survey it commissioned found that one in five staff was still under stress eight weeks after a raid, that staff needed to feel supported after a raid, that customers also needed support, and that counselling for victims should be freely offered.

The union's security spokesman, Ray Shuttleworth, also called for a ban on the carrying of imitation weapons, used in many raids.

Attacks on Banks & Building societies

Diary, page 16

City approves £50m facelift for Smithfield market

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

A PROPOSED £50 million modernisation of Smithfield meat market, involving the removal of much of the interior of the Victorian listed buildings, was approved yesterday by the Corporation of London.

The Court of Common Council authorised the start of work on the £25 million first phase, including a new mezzanine floor in the underground car park and strengthening the main trading floors.

The City Corporation has been forced to overhaul the building under European Community food hygiene laws governing the transport, storage and sale of meat in refrigerated conditions.

Proposals to move the meat market to Nine Elms in Vauxhall on the same site as the new Covent Garden fruit and vegetable market were rejected as the site was considered too small. The corporation would also not have had enough time to seek the necessary parliamentary bill to authorise the move before the introduction of the new hygiene rules next year.

The City will now seek a special dispensation from the EC to allow Smithfield to continue trading using traditional barrows and stalls for three years after the new hygiene rules come into force in April next year.

The refurbishment of the market is due to be completed by 1996. By then meat will be delivered through "docking" doors, enabling it to be taken

from lorry to store without contact with outside air. Inside the market, large refrigerators with clear fronts will replace stalls and only staff in protective clothing will be allowed to handle meat. Wooden barrows will be replaced by electric fork-lift trucks.

Although traders supported the retention of the market on its present site their association, representing the 69 firms that trade there, is fighting a 42 per cent rent in-

crease planned by the City. A spokesman for the corporation said that traders moving into the completed first phase in 1994 would pay rents that would rise from £12 a square foot to £20 to reflect "the much superior accommodation that will be on offer".

Traders would also gain more space by the removal of a large number of slender cast iron pillars supporting the roof and rearrangement of offices in the restored building.

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ELECTION 92

FRIDAY APRIL 3 1992

On other pages

Peter Riddell 12
Leading article 17
Mischief maker... L&T page 1

Liberal Democrats pledge change

Break free from 40 years of failure, urges Ashdown

By Robin Oakley, Political Editor

PADDY Ashdown urged voters last night not to content themselves with changing the government on April 9 but to break free from "40 years of failure" by changing the whole system of government.

The Liberal Democrat leader told an Eastbourne rally that Britain's system of government was now so out of date, centralised, inefficient and secretive that it no longer served the citizen. He said: "Next Thursday you could elect the best politicians in the world. You could elect 650 saints. But it wouldn't make any difference if our system of government no longer works."

Mr Ashdown said that Labour's slogan of "Time for a change" did not offer real change. "It's a return to the old system of Buggin's turn — the old regime in which, if it isn't Tory, it must be Labour, the old regime where every government since the war has

been supported by only a minority of the votes, the old regime that, under both of these parties, has produced 40 years of failure."

He castigated the covert nature of British government, saying that Britain had more secrets than any other country in Europe. "Do you think the government keep their secrets for our benefit or for their own? Do they keep the secrets to improve their performance in the future or to cover up their mistakes in the past?" he asked. Promising a freedom of information act, Mr Ashdown said secrecy encouraged inefficiency and brought waste in confidence and the covering up of government mistakes.

Saying that "the power of the centre has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished", Mr Ashdown pledged Liberal Democrat support for Welsh and Scottish parliaments and prom-

ised to breathe new life into local government. It would mean that decisions would be taken by people who were affected, "not by Whitehall civil servants who think they know best, not by jumped up ministers who push people around", he said.

Urging the need for proportional representation, Mr Ashdown said that at the last election 60 per cent of people voted against the poll tax and only 40 per cent for it. "But Mrs Thatcher wanted it, she was determined to get it and she could not be stopped. She imposed it on her cabinet. Her cabinet imposed it on the Tory party. The Tory party imposed it on our Parliament and then our Parliament imposed it on the people."

Britain, he said, had a discredited system of government which now debased the very idea of democracy. Mr Ashdown, replying to John Major's accusation that he would be the doorman to a Labour Britain, pointed out that Norman Tebbit had said it would be better for Labour to have a coalition government, and said that made Mr Tebbit the doorman to a Labour Britain. He concluded: "The Tories would prefer Labour to real change and Labour would prefer the Tories. It is only the Liberal Democrats who offer real change. But with people on our side we can beat them both and beat their unholy grip on power."

Labour yesterday unveiled its plans for constitutional reform, billed as the most comprehensive this century, but gave few clear indications on the timing of the proposed changes (Arthur Leadley writes).

The reforms include replacing the House of Lords with a second elected chamber and creating a Scottish parliament and devolved assemblies for Wales and English regions. The introduction of a freedom of information act and a commitment to examine the electoral system were also listed as priority issues for the party.

Labour's economy pledge

Kinnock tries to calm City fears

By Philip Webster, Chief Political Correspondent

NEIL Kinnock and John Smith made a concerted attempt to reassure the City yesterday with pledges that a Labour government would neither devalue the pound nor shrink from raising interest rates.

The Labour leader and his shadow Chancellor made plain in interviews and at a London press conference that a Labour government would maintain the value of the currency. Mr Smith said: "There should be no doubt about that. We will take whatever action would be necessary." Mr Kinnock added: "Devaluation is an entirely false refuge."

The Labour leader spoke after billions of pounds were wiped off shares on Wednesday when opinion polls pointed to a majority Labour government. On BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, Mr Kinnock said: "I would hope the City will be more clinical. Under Labour governments the City does very well and so does profitability in industry as well. Profits in the City and industry have fallen back under the Conservative government and there has been shrinkage in the economy."

"From Labour they would get strong recovery policies for employment and for the City. So I hope they will work on that basis and not on the basis of sentiment or, dare I say it, superstition." He said that few analysts thought there would be a run on the pound. "Our commitment to the ERM and the pound is very strong. That will be sustained." He went on: "That message has got through as you have seen during the campaign. There has been little fluctuation in the pound

against the German mark." He insisted that Labour's programme for industrial recovery, increased benefits, pensions and child allowances, the health service and education, "have all been costed and are affordable". Mr Kinnock said that independent analysts had demonstrated that Labour's programme would produce a strong performance for growth, certainly by comparison with the Conservatives. "I am confident not only that we can get a good rate of growth, but that we can sustain that rate of growth without nudging into unsustainable inflation. We will be coming into the European mainstream where we should have been for some years past and where we need to be if we are to be a competitive economy."

He underlined that the ERM was a safeguard against interest rates having to go up. The ability to bring them down was dependent on the performance of the economy. The difference between Labour and the Tories was that Labour would invest to improve productivity, to improve profitability, to improve employment and skills. Mr Kinnock dismissed criticisms that he was inexperienced and had never been a minister. He said: "People who fairly make an assessment of the last eight-and-a-half years in British politics and the contribution I have made in bringing the party back from the lip of oblivion to forming a government next week will see that these assessments are less than fair and somewhat partisan."

Anatole Kaletsky, page 23



Doorstep chat: Jacqueline Foster, Conservative candidate for Newham South, canvassing in the east London constituency

Parties woo women in a bid for the marginals

The party leaders are pursuing women's votes, as each insists that he's the man for them. Ivor Crewe writes

WITH less than a week's campaigning left, the party tacticians are frantically targeting the "women's vote". Women make up 52 per cent of the electorate and, more to the point, 56 per cent of the still substantial poll of "don't knows". In such a close election the party that wins their hearts and minds might win the key to No 10.

But is there a "women's vote" as distinct from women voters? Until 1979 the Conservatives always fared better among women than men — by an uncannily consistent seven points — whatever the outcome of the election. Sociologists put it down to the larger proportion of the elderly and the religious among women and the smaller proportion of manual employees and trade unionists. The left commented wryly that without the triumph of the suffragettes Labour would have won every postwar election.

But when Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979 the gender gap narrowed to three points and in 1983 and 1987 it disappeared. That was not because wives were voting with their husbands — Professor Moni-

ca Chaffor's study found that one third of all couples voted for different parties — but because, it was thought, women were becoming more independent. Sociologists emphasised the growing number of women entering the labour force, the trade unions and higher education, as well as the sharp increase in the number of single mothers dependent on welfare benefits.

According to the two most recent Mori/Times polls the gender gap has widened again, to between four and five points. This is not because women's political concerns appear to be noticeably different from men. When Mori asked respondents to name the two or three most important issues influencing their vote only education — out of 25 issues — was mentioned by significantly more women than men (41-30 per cent) and only unemployment and the economy were mentioned by significantly fewer.

Mr Major leads Neil Kinnock as preferred prime minister by 43-25 per cent among women but he's level pegging at 33 per cent among men.

The proportion of women and men citing health as a key issue is virtually identical. But Labour's margin over the Conservatives on the issue is much narrower among women (43-28 per cent) than among men (56-23 per cent) and this appears to be connected with women's trust in Mr Major. Asked whether the health service is safe in Mr

Major's hands, men said no by a huge margin of 60-34 per cent, women by a much smaller margin of 47-41 per cent.

Perhaps there is a women's vote even if there are no women's issues. Perhaps women give more weight to party leaders and less to party policies. If so, Conservative strategists should think twice before changing Mr Major's image as a decent and trustworthy Mr Nice.

Ivor Crewe is professor of government at the University of Essex.

Claim of growing consumer confidence

Prime minister sees 'golden prospects'

By Sheila Gunn, Political Correspondent

JOHN Major talked yesterday of the "golden prospects" facing Britain in the 1990s as long as the Thatcher legacy was not replaced by high tax, high cost policies which would kill the economy.

The only thing that was needed to get the recovery going, he argued, was a clear, concise election result next Thursday with a Conservative victory. Touring the stands at London's Ideal Home exhibition, he said for the first time that he believed that the recovery had started, adding that it could, however, be some time before that was apparent to everyone.

On his visit, and later on BBC Radio 2's *Jimmy Young* show, Mr Major sought to inject a touch of optimism into his campaign with rosy predictions of the future under a fourth-term Conservative government. He also stood by his decision to delay the general election until April.

As the Majors pondered the double glazing, self-build homes and home alarm systems, the prime minister remarked that the crowds at the show confirmed his view of growing consumer confidence. "People have been buying things and spending money. That is entirely consistent with what we said was going to happen and it is



already beginning to happen, which is very encouraging." He added: "I think there is

now clear evidence, anecdotal and from surveys, that the recovery has started. It will be some time before it is apparent to everyone that it is happening."

Later, in the radio interview, he said: "I believe the prospects for this country in the 1990s are golden prospects provided we do not throw away what has been produced with the wrong sort of policies, such as high taxation, extra costs on employers and killing the economy."

In spite of his remarks about the crowds, a spokesman for the Ideal Home exhibition disclosed that the attendance so far this year was 100,000 down on five years ago.

That nasty Mr Major savages the Belgians

Your sketchwriter was the warm-up act before Jimmy Young interviewed the prime minister yesterday. Mr Young asked me my opinion of Norma. Then he glanced over his shoulder.

I became aware that we were being watched. Major had arrived early. He and his party were watching us from the control room, through the glass screen. I tried not to catch his eye. What do you say about a chap's wife when only an inch of glass stands between you?

It is not difficult to be nice about Norma Major. After that Mr Young played a record. I cracked open a bottle of Malvern water beside me, and gulped it down. "You've just drunk the prime minister's water," announced the loudspeaker. I left some for him. My contribution finished, I yielded my chair to the Main Event, and watched through the glass.

Jimmy Young, star of BBC Radio 2 and one-time crooner of *The Man From Lard-*



CAMPAIN SKETCH
MATTHEW PARRIS

mie, sat smiling across the microphones at the occupant of 10 Downing Street and one-time bookie's runner for the man upstairs in Brixton. On the turntable a recording of the theme from *Brideshead Revisited* revolved at a gentle 33 1/3 rpm. Mr Major, a slightly nervous Aloysius the teddy bear, stroked his chin. Mr Major's arrival had been heralded by a brace of sniffer-dogs. When dynamite is forgotten and the original purpose of these dogs lost in the mists of time, generations as yet unborn will revere the sniffer-dog entrance, as the traditional way for a British premier to arrive.

For politicians, the Jimmy Young interview has long been the sugar-coated option with the occasional unex-

pectedly hard centre. Neil Kinnock did well on the programme more than a week ago, responding quite crisply to Young's covertly impertinent style of gentle questioning. Paddy Ashdown is to be his guest on Monday.

How would Major do? "Broadly flat" was his own description, to Jimmy, of the British economy's performance last year.

Perhaps "steady and reassuring" would be a fairer summary of Major's own performance in interview, which never changes, is never likely to, and will do perfectly well, in anything but desperate circumstances, which these are not, are they? "Are they," asked Young? Not at all, said Major: he'd

been heartened by support from ordinary people: people, he said, like those he'd just met at the Ideal Home exhibition. I tried to visualise the ordinary people you meet at the Ideal Home exhibition. I'm afraid this corresponds to my late Nana's idea of ordinary people, who were nice and to be distinguished from common people, who were not.

Yet the interview had moments of drama, such as when Mr Major lashed out at Belgium. The attack was as savage as it was unexpected. Jimmy Young had made a mild enquiry about proportional representation. "Like Belgium", snarled Mr Major, and something snapped. "It took Belgium 100 days just to form a government. Now that may be acceptable to Belgians, but not to us!" They must be reeling from *Liège* to *Ostend*.

Mr Young played another record. Mr Major's hand returned to his chin, and he sat, smiling thinly, tense,

self-possessed, his little finger resting across the corner of his mouth.

The record finished. Mr Young asked about poll tax, and called it "daft". Mr Major's little finger took on a life of its own, flapping distractedly against his jaw.

To calm the prime minister down, Young called Margaret Thatcher a poisoned chalice, whereupon Major called her a tremendous platform. From his vantage point on the tremendous platform, Mr Major then peered into the future and pronounced it "golden". He glanced suspiciously at the water I had left. Whether he has been as careful with the poisoned chalice, and — if not — whether any drink it, and live, we shall know in a week's time.

"Our education reforms," John told Jimmy, "will show results over time." "You've got a week," said Jimmy. "A week and five years, Jimmy," said John.

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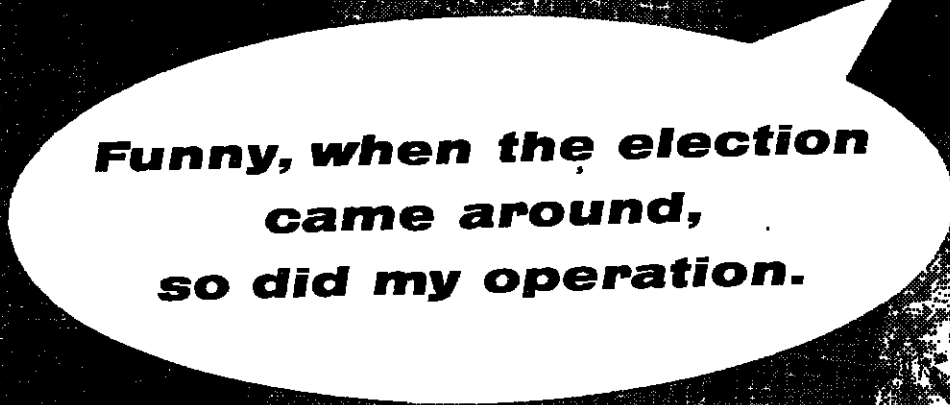
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NALGO

Polls show decisive change

Professions start to swing leftwards

By LIN JENKINS

WHILE politicians and the pundits have assumed that the gift of government lies with the C2s, those in the professional classes could play a decisive role in the outcome as polls disclose their changing allegiances.

A series of surveys show that most professionals have made up their minds, there apparently being little kudos in being a "don't know". No consistent pattern has emerged, but the drift from the Conservatives is clear.

Accountants are fighting 47 seats, in 14 of which they are seeking re-election. They split 49 per cent for the Tories, 38 per cent for Lib Dems and 13 per cent for Labour. *AccountancyAge* remarked that it is no surprise that support for the third force in British politics is so high.

Four out of ten computer professionals plan to support the Conservatives and 28 per cent Lib Dem. But the figures compiled from 1,000 readers of *Computer Weekly* show Tory support has dwindled by 7 per cent since the last election and the Lib Dems are up 25 per cent. One disillusioned information technology manager said he supported the Raving Loony party: "At least it is clear and honest about its intentions."

At the top, support for the Conservatives is more solid. A poll of 200 directors in the industry, done for Hewlett-Packard, found nearly two-thirds supported them, one in four the Lib Dems and only one in seven Labour.

Several polls show family doctors giving up their traditional support for the Tories in apparent protest at NHS reform. A survey of 3,000 doctors for *Hospital Doctor* found that support for the Tories had fallen from 51 per cent before the last election to 28 per cent now. Labour increased its share from 20 to 37 per cent, with the Lib Dems at 33 per cent.

Another poll, of 400 family doctors for *Pulse*, found that Conservatives had the most

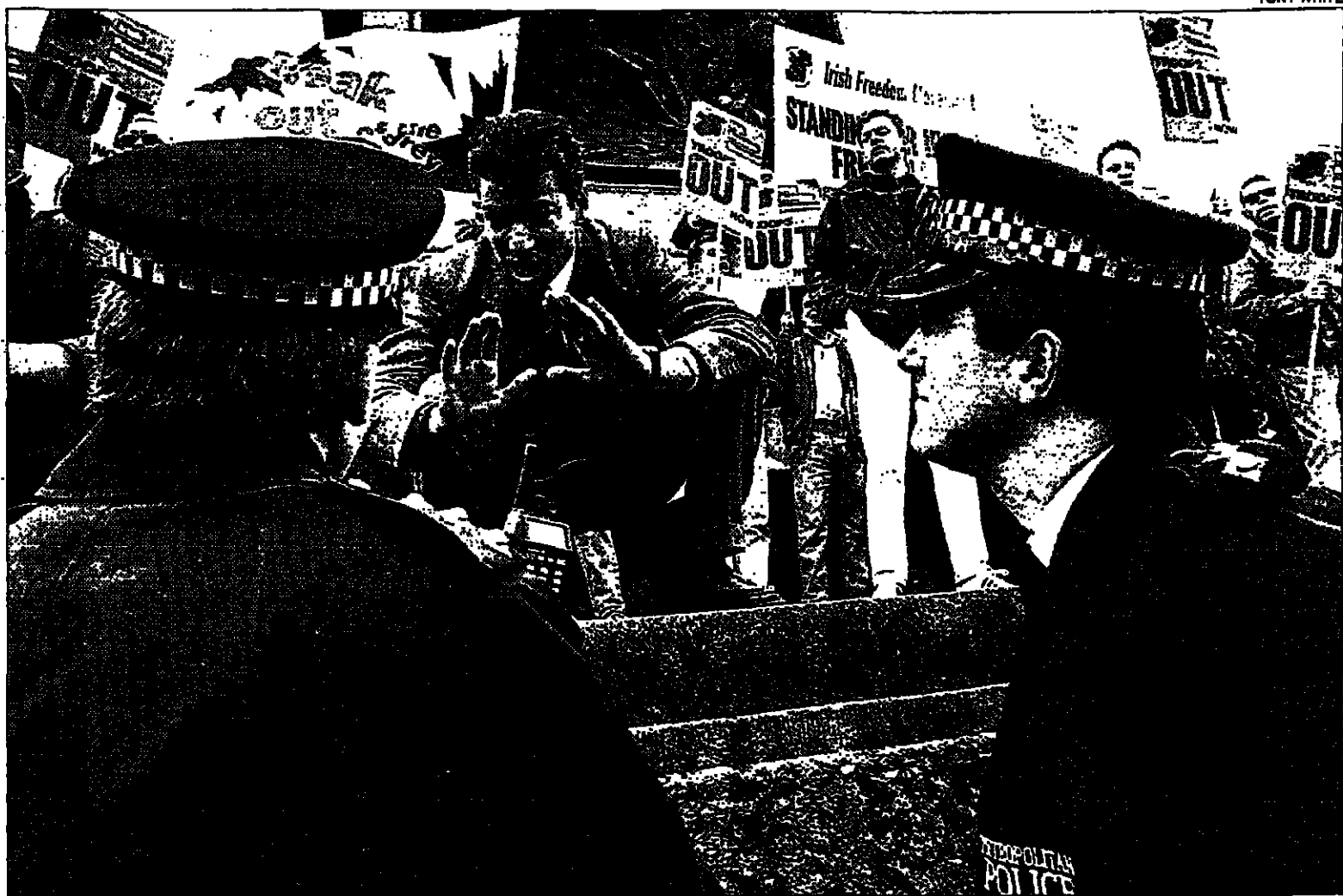
support, with 29.8 per cent, that was in contrast with 45.3 per cent last time. The Lib Dems were up to 24.8 per cent compared to 21.8 in 1987. More than half said a change of government would help the NHS and only 27 per cent favoured Tory policy on the GP contract; 42 per cent favoured Labour.

Doctors seem to be socialists in the surgery and Tories at home, with more than half favouring Tory tax policy compared with 16 per cent for Labour's and 14 per cent for the Lib Dems.

The same could be suspected of academics. Labour is set to capture 57 per cent of the vote in further and higher education, the highest since records of their voting intentions began. According to a poll of 518 academics for *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 21 per cent favour the Lib Dems and 17 per cent the Conservatives. In 1987, Labour gained 33 per cent of the lecturers' votes.

Among higher grade staff 70 per cent of professors and principal lecturers said they would vote Labour this time. A survey of teachers for *The Times Educational Supplement* found their loyalty, which in 1987 switched from the Tories to the Alliance, has shifted again, this time to Labour, which attracted only 28 per cent of the vote last time. The party now commands 51 per cent, the Lib Dems 24 and Conservatives 20. Among primary school teachers, 44 per cent said they would vote Labour as did 49 per cent of head teachers, despite grave warnings from central office that they would be worse off under John Smith's tax plans.

As for the bookies, they are confident that, with £6 million pledged by the punters, there is, as usual, no way they can lose. "On the basis that we will scoop the pools, we will all be voting for Lord Sutch," Graham Sharpe, of William Hill, said.



Irish protest: Alex Farrell, Irish Freedom Movement candidate for City of London and Westminster South, remonstrating with police during a rally in Trafalgar Square yesterday. The seat was held in 1987 by Peter Brooke, Northern Ireland secretary

Law and order

Baker pledges tougher action

By NICHOLAS WOOD
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LAWS aimed at upholding law and order were promised by the Conservatives yesterday as they accused Labour of being soft on crime and sympathising as much with culprits as with victims.

"Our particular concern is always for the victims of crime. That is not invariably the case with Labour," John Major said.

Kenneth Baker, home secretary, said that he would bring forward legislation, either separately or in a new criminal justice bill, to deal with the problem of young men who reoffend while on bail, squatting and unwanted gypsy encampments. The

home secretary defended the government's record on crime, saying that the average 6 per cent rise in recorded crime since 1979 was in line with the trend under governments of both parties since 1945. Most of the increase in recent years was due to a surge in property crime, particularly car crime. In the past year, sexual crimes had not increased and offences involving violence had levelled off. "That is a direct result of our tougher sentencing policy," Mr Baker said.

However, the prime minister and the home secretary concentrated on attacking Labour over its attitude towards law enforcement. Mr Major said that the Opposition had repeatedly voted

against longer sentences for hardened criminals and against the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Mr Baker said that a Labour government would scrap the automatic life sentence for murder, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the tougher sentencing brought in since 1979.

They denied that poverty played a part in the causes of crime. Mr Baker said that amid the affluence of the mid-Eighties, Labour had blamed rising crime on the greedy society. Now it was arguing the opposite. Mr Major emphasised the importance Tories attached to parents, teachers and neighbours instilling "intrinsic values" in the young and not condoning minor delinquency.

Voters start to lose interest in crime

Law and order is not the important election issue that it used to be.
Richard Ford examines why

LAW and order has traditionally been one of the strongest weapons in the Conservatives' election armoury yet, in spite of a rise in recorded crime, it remains low among voters' priorities.

In a list of issues that would be most important in persuading people how to vote, Mori found that law and order came seventh with only 6 per cent, compared with 19 per cent in 1987.

Criminologists and politicians suggest a variety of reasons for the apparent lack of interest in law and order at a time when recorded crime last year rose to 5.3 million offences. Opposition politicians suggest that the figures indicate that law and order no longer works to the Tory advantage and that it is not in their interest to highlight it too strongly. But criminologists argue that some research indicates that people

are not the victims of crime as much as is indicated by recorded crime figures. The last British Crime Survey in 1988, which reflects the results of interviews with a cross-section of the public, indicated that police figures overstated crime. Trevor Bennett, lecturer in police and crime prevention studies at Cambridge University, said: "The public are much more concerned about nuisances and incivility, youths hanging around streets, than crime itself."

He added: "I sense also some confusion, with people asking what can anyone do to reduce crime. It's an area both parties would like to

steer clear of at the moment." Although the Tories have increased spending on the police in real terms by 70 per cent since 1979, the figure that makes the headline is not the increase in police resources or numbers but the rise in recorded crime.

With all parties living in fear of being thought to be soft on crime, the Tories find themselves in a difficulty of their own making. The short, sharp, shock treatment of the early Eighties has been abandoned in favour of giving non-violent offenders non-custodial sentences.

The Tory manifesto outlines a strategy based on

tackling the roots of crime and getting greater efficiency from the police service. It involves an attempt to address in society the reasons why people turn to crime.

Much of this strategy is similar to the approach outlined by Labour, whose package links law enforcement and punishment with crime prevention and policies designed to improve the social climate that it associates with criminal activity.

The Liberal Democrats lean more to Labour's law and order proposals, including greater police accountability and efforts to improve recruitment from the ethnic minority communities. They would give local councils powers to develop full crime prevention programmes, would expand Neighbourhood Watch schemes and re-deploy police resources to put more officers on the beat.

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Rigid political system hampers economic recovery

Time to change constitution

BRITAIN can no longer tolerate its present political system. Even the upheavals in the communist camp have made it clear that an indissoluble link exists between economic modernisation and political reform.

A rigid political system hampers economic recovery. Thatcherism's attempt to modernise was bound to founder because it denied the necessity of political reform and held on firmly to the old system. More than ever, Britain is a centrally run unitary state, whose head of government enjoys a power that is unusual for a democracy, if not unique.

The prime minister can behave almost like an all-powerful monarch. The controlling function of parliament is less developed than in most western democracies. The MPs of the majority party have been degraded to nothing more than lobby fodder. The government scarcely needs to pay any attention to the upper house and, in any case, it is not legitimised by elections.

The head of the government also has no need to trouble himself with influential "provincial princelings", for there are no federal struc-

Juergen Kroenig of *Die Zeit* offers a critical view in our series on how foreign correspondents see the election

tures. The Bank of England (contrary to the Bundesbank) is subject to instruction: if a government thinks it necessary, it can instigate an economic boom before the election. The prime minister can decide the date of the election within the limit of five years. The judiciary exists not so much as a control on the executive, but in a symbiotic relationship with it. The Lord Chancellor and Attorney-General sit in the cabinet. Members of cabinet do not need to be confirmed by parliament. A British premier can, on his own initiative, declare war, nominate leaders of the church and reward those in favour with a seat in the upper house.

The sovereignty of parliament has long since been transformed into the sovereignty of the government. As long ago as 1967, Quintin Hogg, later Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone and Lord Chancellor, called the British system of government an elective dictatorship. He repeated

his warning shortly before leaving the Thatcher cabinet. The country, meanwhile, has paid a high price so that "parliamentary sovereignty" should exist only in political textbooks. The highest judges have fallen for a series of crass misjudgments, often a result of the close link with the executive.

An obsession with secrecy has made Britain a laughing stock (as, for example, in the affair of the memoirs of a former spy) and led many Britons to realise that, instead of a secrecy law, they needed a law on freedom of information. The secret services carry on as ever without any parliamentary control.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are ruled almost as colonies. That has tangibly increased the pressure for autonomy. The rule of the majority deprives sections of voters of political power, which necessarily belongs in the spectrum of a pluralist society. The Liberal Democrats, Charter 88 and

thoughtful politicians of the Labour and Conservative parties know what Britain lacks: a written constitution, which limits the power of the rulers; a catalogue of basic rights, an independent constitutional court, an independent central bank, federal structures and a new law on the vote. Measured by its constitution, Britain has become like a developing country. The teacher of democracy has fallen behind, but the ruling political class still does not realise that, at the end of the 20th century, much has to change.

How big are the chances for a reform? Even if the Conservatives are to achieve a majority again, the relationship must change between London and Brussels, between Westminster and the provinces and, not least, between the English and the Celtic peoples. However, perhaps the wavering, disillusioned British will choose a parliament in which none of the big parties commands an absolute majority. Perhaps a hung parliament could then bring in an end to the old system.

Leading article, page 17



Early start: Kevin McNamara, shadow Northern Ireland secretary, on the hustings in London yesterday with grand-daughter Rebecca, aged six weeks

VOX POP
by Peter Barnard

Italians ignore 'unsexy' election

The Italians feel that it lacks sex appeal. The Canadians can hardly get enough of it. The Americans say that it could do with Margaret Thatcher but the Japanese are so impressed they might well make a copy and take it home.

British television screens are dominated by the election campaign but the rest of the world has its own agenda. Virtually every developed country, and quite a few undeveloped ones, have television stations with a London bureau, most of which are beating on a soundproof door when it comes to showing British election coverage on their own networks.

Canada and Japan are the most interesting exceptions. John Owen, London bureau chief of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, says he expects to see about ten pieces lasting two minutes each on the main, 22-minute, nightly news by the end of the campaign. Next Monday, *The Journal*, Canada's *Panorama*, will run a ten-minute item previewing the poll and the issues involved.

"We have done items on Scottish devolution, for example, which has a great deal of relevance for Canadians because of the Quebec issue. Canada is headed for an election in the next 18 months and a lot of people are talking about the possibility of a five-way coalition, so the chance of a hung parliament here has echoes in Canada," he says.

The American networks have shown almost nothing of the election, although Cable News Network is using a mixture of ITN footage and its own reports to give the election exposure in America and via CNN International, which reaches 137 countries.

Japan, however, has a special reason for following the election: whereas the British are talking of proportional representation, they are thinking of adopting the present British system. Jiro Hirano, London bureau chief for NHK, the main Japanese network, says it will run two 50-minute documentaries, on April 15 and May 3, explaining how the British system works.

"Our present system is much more based on individual candidates than on parties," Mr Hirano said, "and, with so much competition for each seat, huge amounts of money are spent and corruption arises. We are very interested in how you do it here." In addition to the documentaries, NHK is running four items on its main news this week (yesterday's lasted six minutes) and five are scheduled for next week.

European television stations are more inclined to treat the election on its news value each day. As with British coverage of the American election, Italian coverage of our election has been eclipsed by their own poll, which is on April 5 and 6. RAI, the main network, is taking all its British coverage from Visnews, but little is getting on the air.

Primo Montali, London manager for RAI, says British campaigns are dull. "They are much more exciting in Italy, they have more sex appeal. Of course we have elections all the time; in some ways it is a ridiculous situation, but Italians love it."

Tory says sorry for accusation

Graham Bright, Tory candidate in Luton South, apologised yesterday for accusing Diane McKenzie, the wife of Bill McKenzie, his Labour rival, of orchestrating a demonstration against John Major, who was jostled during a walkabout in Luton. Solicitors for Mr Bright, Mr Major's parliamentary private secretary in the last Parliament, said in a statement that he had offered Mrs McKenzie a full apology and accepted that she was not directing the actions of a mob, nor egging it on. "He further accepts that she was only engaged in heckling the prime minister having made her way to where the crowd had gathered."

Labour lead

The Tory marginal seat of Birmingham, Yardley is likely to fall to Labour, according to a poll carried out by Quality Fieldwork for the Birmingham Evening Mail. It puts support for Labour at 40 per cent (36.6 in 1987), Conservatives 35 (42.6), Lib Dems 24 (20.8), others 1 (1). The survey was done in face-to-face interviews among a sample of 1,010 electors across the constituency on Saturday and Monday.

Crying for Tory

Michael Heseltine took on the role of town crier, complete with brass band, to deliver his message on behalf of Conal Gregory, Conservative candidate in the marginal constituency of York.

Paddy suits job

If the election depended only on sartorial elegance, Paddy Ashdown would make it. No 10, John Taylor, editor of *British Style* magazine, says that John Major is dull and Neil Kinnock has a "boy" figure. Mr Ashdown, he says, looks better in a Barbour jacket than does Mr Major.

Voting with feet

David and Christine Jackson, whose home just outside Howick, on the Northumberland coast, is being used as a polling station for the village will have to travel five miles to vote because the house, Copple Hall, is in the neighbouring parish of Craster.

TV battle heats up

BY MELINDA WITTSTOCK, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

ITN unveiled its answer to the BBC's "swingometer" in the election ratings war yesterday: an elaborate computer graphic of the Commons.

As results come in, the green benches will fill with red, blue, yellow and other-coloured figures and the presenter, John Suchet, will walk through the graphic pointing to seats gained and lost.

It is ITN's first election night without Sir Alastair Burnet and Sir David Nicholas, former editor, but it has Sir Robin Day as interviewer-in-chief. Jon Snow, the *Channel 4* News presenter, will be the programme's main anchor, with Julia Somerville interpreting the exit poll and Trevor McDonald reporting from outside Conservative Central Office.

A Harris exit poll will start ITN's election programme at

10pm, five minutes after the BBC's NOP exit poll. In 1987, ITN's exit poll was correct: the BBC was criticised for forecasting a smaller Tory majority than proved to be the case.

ITN, which is spending £2 million on 17 hours of live reporting on election night compared to the BBC's £2.5 million, yesterday dismissed the return of BBC's "swingometer" as a "two-dimensional element of the Seventies". Stewart Purvis, editor-in-chief, said a swingometer could not allow for a three-party element and "maybe that's not such a good idea with support for the Lib Dems increasing".

Alastair Stewart, *News At Ten* presenter, said the swingometer was valid for only 46 marginal seats out of the 94 Labour needed to win an outright majority.

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VOX POP
by Peter Barnard

Italians ignore 'unsexy' election

The Italians feel that a lack of sex appeal, the Canadians can hardly be enough at it, the Americans say that it could do with Margaret Thatcher but the Japanese are so impressed they might even make a copy and take it home.

British television news are dominated by the election campaign but the rest of the world has its own agenda. Virtually every developed country and quite a few underdeveloped ones have television stations, some of which are running on a soundproof basis when it comes to showing British election coverage on their own networks.

Canada and Japan are the most interesting exceptions. John Lynch, London bureau chief of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, says he expects three million people will watch the 22-minute nightly news at the end of the evening. Next Monday, the *Journal* Canada's *Parade*, will also a 10-minute programme showing the race and the outcome.

We have done some of Scottish devolution for example, which has a dozen of ministers. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has an election programme in the morning and a 10-minute news at the end of the evening. The *Journal* Canada's *Parade*, will also a 10-minute programme showing the race and the outcome.

The American news have not yet started to show the election results. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are the only ones to have started to show the election results.

Japan has a 10-minute news at the end of the evening. The *Asahi Shimbun* and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* are the only ones to have started to show the election results.

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For all those who love driving, BMW offer a long awaited alternative to the estate car. The 5 Series Touring.

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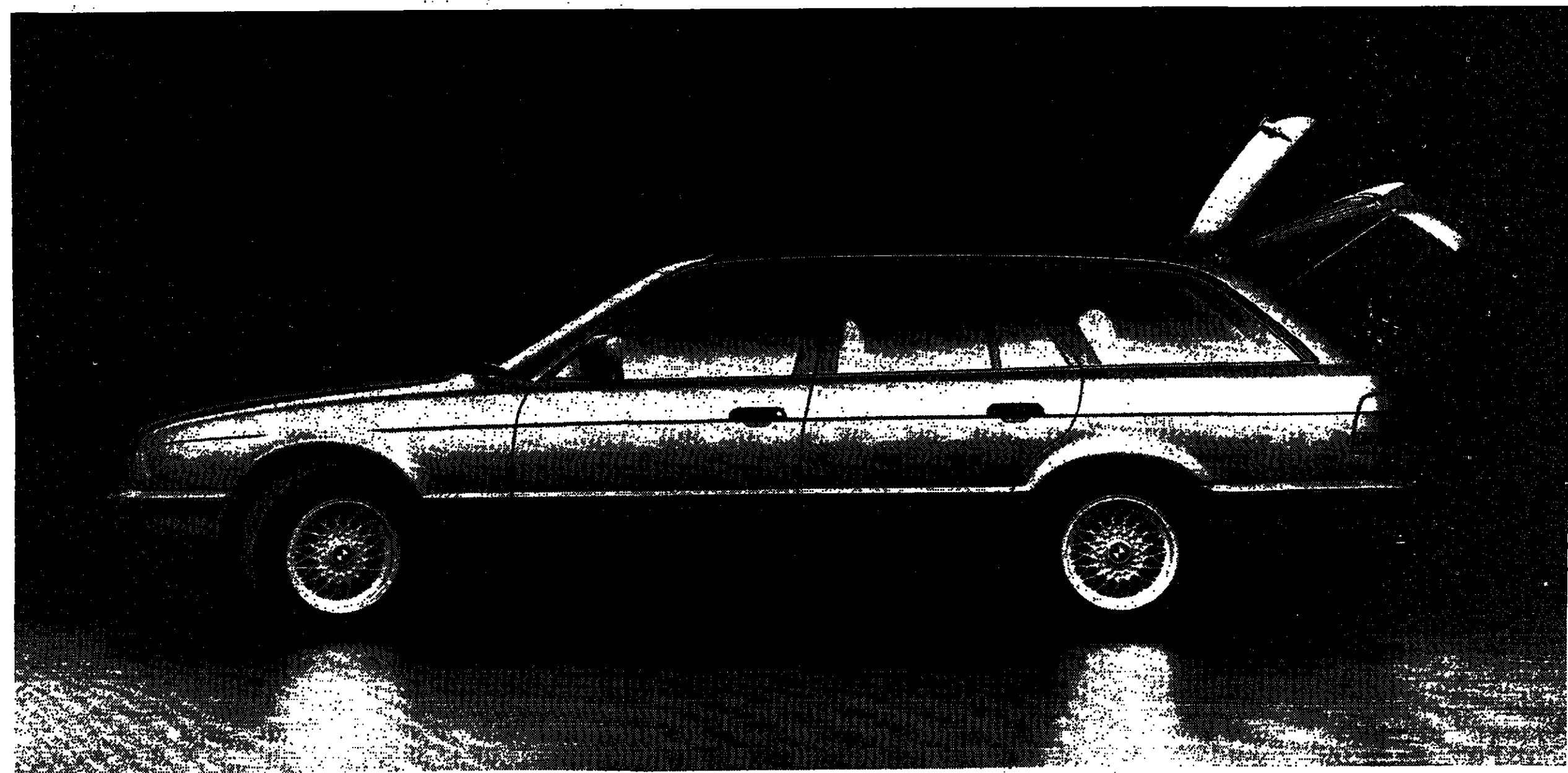
As to the double sunroof: in a country with half as much sun as it should have, it's a measure that's long overdue. You can open the front. Or the back. Or the front and the back. Or tilt the front. And one push of a button will get you back to square one.

Finally, there's a full width tailgate with a window that opens separately to take lighter loads.

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Mitterrand's scapegoat bids adieu

Cresson puts brave face on failure

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

EDITH Cresson finally took her leave of the French early yesterday morning with a brave public face that concealed the intense bitterness she feels towards the Socialist party leadership.

As the removal vans arrived at the prime minister's quarters in the Hôtel Matignon, Mme Cresson's aides were making clear her fury at those she believes set out to wreck her ten-month term in office. Ushered out by a new opinion

poll showing that almost 70 per cent of those asked wanted President Mitterrand to sack her, she also wanted to know that other women in the government are in despair about the misogyny of ageing party notables. And it is hardly a secret that she considers Pierre Bérégovoy, her successor, to be prominent among the guilty men.

Although the game was up for Mme Cresson long before the disasters of the recent

regional and local elections, her determined rear-guard action, seeking to persuade Mitterrand to keep her on with a new and politically attractive cabinet, was totally in character. For all her inept performance in office, she was always a fighter. "My little soldier," the president called her back in the honeymoon days as she marched into trouble on his orders.

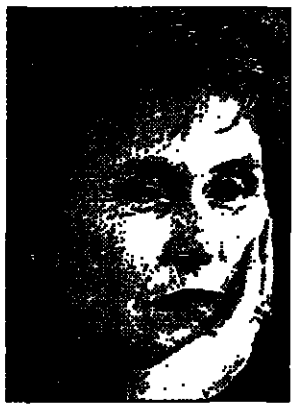
Even her many detractors concede that this poised and elegant woman displayed grace under the relentless pressure of her extreme unpopularity with the French. Most observers also acknowledge that she inherited heavy burdens, from an economy on the brink of recession to a cupboard full of damaging scandals.

Never strong on tactics, Mme Cresson soon earned the enmity of the Socialist old guard by pressing Mitterrand to open the government to younger talent from outside the party. And her important speeches too often came over as strident lectures. Also, she had an unfortunate gift for making the wrong sort of headline. Claiming that most British men are homosexuals or deriding the Japanese as "worker ants" did nothing to enhance her image.

To the clear majority of the French, Mme Cresson appeared utterly out of place, a flame-haired, privileged Parisian in designer outfits playing at "champane Socialism" as the country fell on harder times. She had also to face rumours, persistent but never proven, that her long-standing relationship with Mitterrand went some way beyond the strictly political: her first address to parliament as prime minister was disrupted by opposition jeers of "Madame Pompadour".

Mme Cresson has lost her battle, but Mitterrand has been gravely wounded and emerges without credit. She was his choice, his mistake, and while she solidly soaked up the punishment for unpopular policies handed down from the Elysée Palace, his ultimate concern was self-preservation at any cost.

Leading article, page 17



Cresson: has stolidly soaked up punishment

Man in the News

Grey Bérégovoy brings little cheer

A nervous Mitterrand has played it safe in his choice of Mme Cresson's successor. Philip Jacobson writes

At the end of a week of Avalliation that has done nothing for President Mitterrand's standing, the choice of Pierre Bérégovoy to replace Edith Cresson as prime minister represents a nervous vote for safety first that could easily rebound on the Elysée Palace. By no stretch of the imagination can "Béré", 67 next birthday and the epitome of the old school of French socialism, be presented as a prime minister to rally the shattered party, let alone lift the nation out of the profound morass that afflicts it.

The appointment of M Bérégovoy firmly underlines the poverty of leadership on the French left. Whatever his reassuringly solid qualities, almost 40 years of devoted service to Mitterrand must label him as one of the "elephants" whom Mme Cresson blames for resisting her efforts to drag the party into the 1990s. He has been installed at the Matignon, the prime minister's office, barely a year away from a formidable difficult general election. This can only reflect Mitterrand's conviction that once the form candidate, Jacques Delors, the European Commission president, had dealt himself out, imposing another "unorthodox" candidate upon the French (perhaps Jack Lang, the effervescent culture minister) was simply too much of a risk.

The mild and unassuming M Bérégovoy possesses textbook working-class credentials. He is the self-educated son of a small tradesman from Rouen who came to left-wing politics via a lowly job on the railway — where he served in the Resistance — then the state gas utility. In a cabinet stuffed with graduates of France's intellectual production lines, M Bérégovoy

does not even possess a baccalauréat. Having toiled alongside Mitterrand along the latter's long years in the political wilderness, M Bérégovoy enjoys the president's trust and confidence. In 1981, after Mitterrand had finally made it to the Elysée Palace, he appointed him as chief-of-staff, then brought him into the cabinet.

By the undemanding standards of French politics today, M Bérégovoy is generally perceived as honest, hard-working and extremely competent. At almost 40 per cent, his latest popularity rating was twice as high as Mme Cresson's and also above the president's.

Over the past few years, M Bérégovoy's unswerving pursuit of economic austerity has earned him the nickname of "M Rigueur" and the fierce hostility of the trade unions as unemployment continues to mount. Many a lapsed Socialist voter would endorse yesterday's assessment of him by a centrist politician as "minister of taxes, budget deficit, unemployment and financial scandals".

By contrast, the bankers and the Bourse applaud his devotion to low inflation — at 3.1 per cent, France has at last undercut the Germans — and to maintaining the value of the franc.

But the real crunch will come with the 1993 election campaign, when French voters can pass personal judgment on him. Admirers concede that M Bérégovoy is a desperately grey politician, hopeless at the business of shaking hands and kissing babies, while his long-winded manner of speaking is said to bore Mitterrand almost to tears.



Target practice: an army technician plots trajectories on a map of Moscow at a missile command centre in Dolgoprudny, a closed army town where the S-300 anti-missile missile system is based. The S-300, which the Russians claim is superior to the Patriot batteries deployed by the Americans during the Gulf war, was unveiled at Dolgoprudny

yesterday for the first time. The opening of the missile centre came amid growing concern over weapons sales, which are no longer in line with the rules of international arms trading. At a Nato meeting in Brussels on Wednesday, Tom King, the defence secretary, called for strict controls on the sale of weapons from former Soviet republics.

Italian devolutionists look for gains in the red belt

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN BOLOGNA

HISTORY counts as much as does resentment of Rome for the League of the North in cultured Emilia Romagna, where federalist leaders like to quote Garibaldi: "Let us leave the people to eat their macaroni in their own way."

Luigi Rossi, the dean of the league candidates standing for the Bologna-Ferrara constituency in the Italian general election on Sunday, illustrates his call for an

autonomous "Republic of the North" by referring to the original Lombardy League that took up arms against the Holy Roman Emperor Federico in 1172. "I was pleased to learn that Bologna was among the cities that obtained autonomy at the peace of Constance in 1183 in return for recognising the overlord authority of the holy Roman emperor," he said. Signor Rossi is a distin-

guished journalist who covered the battle of Stalingrad for the Bologna newspaper, *Il Resto del Carlino*, in the second world war. He gives the league an air of sophistication fitting for a city that boasts one of the oldest universities in Europe. Traditional pride in all things regional, including Bologna's reputation as the gastronomic capital of Italy, plays a large part in the league campaign in Emilia. Signor Rossi warns to his theme, quoting Garibaldi while tucking into roast beef with parmesan cheese and tagliatelli alla Bolognese at the restaurant in the smart hotel Baglioni.

This thoughtful campaigning style contrasts with the brash populism of the Lombardy League leader, Umberto Bossi, who denies being racist but makes clear his disdain for almost everyone from the Italian south. The League movement in Emilia began only in the late 1980s, some five years after it sprang up in Lombardy, and it has 2,000 signed-up members in Bologna. In the 1990 local elections, the movement won one seat in each of the city and provincial councils. Lucio Bordini, the provincial secretary, hopes it will take two parliamentary seats in the region.

The league hopes to profit from the split within the Italian communist movement. Indeed, Davide Visani, national organiser of the former communist Democratic Party of the Left, acknowledged the devolutionists could win at least one seat in the "red belt" region.

Pesticide ban will hit tulips

FROM MARK FULLER IN AMSTERDAM

THE tulip, the national symbol of The Netherlands and market leader of its flower industry, is under threat from a government plan to cut the use of pesticides, according to bulb growers.

The bulbs are now associated with a pollution problem. The intensive bulb-growing sector uses about 240lb in pesticides and soil fumigants per acre — by far the highest concentration in the world. Concern has grown about the toxic effects of these chemicals on workers and the increasing levels of pollution in the ground water. 75 per cent of which has been affected, according to one survey.

The government scheme, which comes before parliament next week, aims to ban a number of products and reduce the use of insecticides and fungicides by 60 per cent by the end of the decade. The proposals spell disaster for the industry, the bulb growers say. "We can accept a cut in volume, although it will be difficult. But a ban on some products will make bulb growing impossible. Diseases will become so firmly established that we will no longer be able to combat them," Aad Wollebregt, a spokesman for the bulb-growing sector, said.

The government is not expected to bow under the industry's lobbying. "The plan will cause the growers some financial problems, but environmental protection is a priority and it is the polluter that has to pay," an agricultural ministry spokesman said.

Church seeks links

Moscow: Russia's Orthodox Patriarchate, presiding over a spectacular rise in its influence at home, is moving towards reconciliation with White Russians overseas and seeking to mend a rupture with its members in Ukraine (Bruce Clark writes).

Russian bishops have gathered at the ancient Danilovsky monastery to consider canonising some of the most famous martyrs of the 1917 revolution, which would draw them closer to the Russian Orthodox Church in exile.

Among those being considered is Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, a member of the imperial family who founded a nursery after her husband was killed by revolutionaries in the upheavals of 1905. The White Russian church has always insisted, as a precondition for reconciliation, that Tsar Nicholas be acknowledged as a saint and martyr.

Croats targeted

Belgrade: Vojislav Seselj, Serbia's leading nationalist politician, has called in parliament for the expulsion of all the republic's Croats. Mr Seselj, respected by President Milosevic, once threatened to gouge out Croat eyes "with rusty spoons".

Fighting stops

Kishinev: Moldova says that the fighting between its police and Russian separatists has stopped, removing the threat by the locally based former Soviet Union's 14th army that it would deploy troops to enforce a ceasefire. (Reuters)

Asylum sought

Bonn: A further 35,059 asylum seekers — almost double the number officials were able to vet — arrived in Germany in March, bringing the total to 97,397 this year. Another 47,702 ethnic Germans, most from the former Soviet Union, have also arrived.

Rebel charged

Paris: Francisco Mugica Garmendia, a commander of Eta, the Basque separatist group, has been charged here with possessing arms and explosives and belonging to a commando which Spanish police blame for several bomb attacks. (Reuters)

Workers march

Vigo, Spain: Up to 100,000 workers marched through Vigo, capping a one-day general strike in the province of Galicia. Unions may call a nationwide strike if the government does not implement a development plan for the region. (Reuters)

Hijackers flee

Moscow: Three hijackers who seized hostages in southern Russia and then surrendered in the breakaway republic of Chechnya have escaped from prison, Tass reported. The men took advantage of clashes in Grozny to break out of jail. (Reuters)

Joke misfires

Moscow: Russians in the Kurile islands, seized from Japan by the Soviet Union in the second world war, are demanding an apology after Russian television caused panic with an April Fool joke saying the islands were to be given back. (Reuters)

EC is main food donor to Moscow

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

THE European Community has surpassed domestic sources as the main supplier of meat and dairy products to Moscow and St Petersburg and it would welcome help from America and other countries, Michael Emerson, the EC's chief representative in Russia, said yesterday.

His comments reflected a widespread sense in Western Europe that the latest American proposals for aid to Russia should not distract attention from the burden being shouldered by the EC, which is half-way through the disbursement of a food aid programme worth 200 million euros (£143 million).

Mr Emerson said the EC was the only supplier of butter, virtually the only provider of milk powder and until recently the sole significant source of meat for the two cities. Before the last price controls were lifted a few days ago, only a "trickle" of fresh milk had been reaching the cities because Russian farmers found it more lucrative to produce cheese or yoghurt.

● Sydney: Edward Shevardnadze, the interim leader of Georgia, yesterday placed advertisements in newspapers in several countries pleading for spiritual and financial support for the Independent States. (Reuters)

Gallantry cuts little ice in harsh new market world

THERE is a certain image of the Polish gentleman. He gives flowers to women acquaintances at every opportunity, he opens doors with a flourish and, at the briefest encounter, grabs a female hand and kisses it in greeting.

This 19th-century vision is fading fast: the Helsinki Watch Committee has reported that while Poland has become more democratic, the rights of women have shrunk and are shrinking. Old world courtesies are no substitute for a job, a decent wage or a crèche. "And frankly," says Anka, aged 28, "this hand-kissing business is pretty unhygienic."

The New York-based committee found that hyperinflation had destroyed the base of most alimony payments or housekeeping allowances and women were often forced to court to squeeze out their due. It found that men were regularly favoured over women in a very tight Polish job market. This was partly because of the social infrastructure introduced by the communists — women were given generous maternity leave and granted paid time off if their children were sick. In the new capitalist climate, that raises the cost of employing women. More than half of Poland's two million unemployed are women.

It is a similar story in the rest of Eastern Europe. Spending cuts in Czechoslovakia and Hungary have hit hospitals, one of the biggest

Capitalism is putting the necessities of life in the shops but it is threatening the rights that communism promised women. Roger Boyes writes in Warsaw



employers of women; in Sofia it was reported recently that nurses had to double as prostitutes. One Slovak sociologist remarked: "We don't see women as second-class citizens. Rather we see them as aliens from outer space. Who put them here? What do they want from us?"

Things are probably worst in Poland. New legal provisions are designed to slow down the divorce process and, under one proposal being considered in parliament, a marriage could only be dissolved after ten years of separation. The right-wing Christian National Union party dominates the present government. Its ideas include "family wages" — a move aimed at keeping women at home — and it wants a strict ban on abortion. The abor-

tion issue has rallied the rather weak feminist movement in Poland. There are about 30 feminist groups and they are beginning to make an impact. But at the top of both politics and industry there is a thick wall of unyielding men. Anna Popowicz, the government plenipotentiary on family affairs — and one of the few women in the political establishment — has just been edged out of her job for not opposing abortion strongly enough.

Under communism abortion was granted on demand. Indeed a dense network of women's rights was put in place by the communists. These are now swiftly being unravelled. Slavenka Drakulic, a Croatian writer, has argued that the rights and privileges granted to East European women under communism were soon eroded by the general economic malaise, with the system unable even to produce sanitary towels. Nowadays, ordinary life has improved, at least for reasonably well-off women. There are fewer queues, and high-street shops sell not only tampons and cotton wool but also stylish clothing. But for poorer women, life has become very difficult.

Yeltsin sacrifices aide to keep reforms on course

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

A SWINGING attack on Boris Yeltsin's radical government by Russian Khasbulatov, the chairman of parliament, and a symbolic concession to the opposition by the president highlighted the fierce struggle in progress for Russia's economic future.

The moves came four days before the opening of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies at which the course of Russia's economic reforms, as well as the personalities behind them, will be crucial issues. Mr Yeltsin's concession took the form of a presidential decree relieving Yegor Gaidar — the economic reform supremo — of his post as finance minister.

Later it was made clear that Mr Gaidar, who has been pilloried by the opposition since prices were freed in January, would retain his position as first deputy premier in charge of economic reform. A deputy finance minister, Vasil Barchuk, was promoted to be minister.

The decree allows the opposition to claim a victory — and possibly take some of the heat off Mr Gaidar — while leaving the balance of power unchanged. Earlier, Mr Yeltsin had insisted that he would not change his team: "We can't sacrifice this truly reformist government," he told reporters. "It is a bold, cohesive and young team."

Mr Yeltsin issued his decree at the end of a day on



Gaidar: removed from his finance post

which Mr Khasbulatov had used his position as chairman of the Russian parliament to declare war on the government's economic policy. Although Mr Khasbulatov had sniped at the government for several months, this was the first time he had exploited his chairmanship to marshal parliament into a formal opposition bloc.

Mr Khasbulatov, formerly an academic economist, spent 40 minutes at the beginning of yesterday's session tearing into most aspects of the economic reforms — from their monetarist origins to their effect on living standards. He supplied deputies with three long documents purporting to substantiate his view that there must be more support for the low-paid and

that the fall in industrial production had to be halted.

But bowing to Mr Yeltsin's continued popularity, Mr Khasbulatov declined to condemn reform as such: "I have always been as fervent a supporter of thorough economic reform as anyone," he said, and admitted that he had "no ready prescriptions". What he wanted were "correctives" to eliminate the "miscellaneous calculations and failures".

After all the statistics and rhetoric, Mr Khasbulatov's final message — "slow down a bit" — was mild, but it encapsulated a whole world-view which is all the more dangerous for its apparent harmlessness. "Slowing down" could bring reform to a halt.

Compared with last autumn, the chairman of the Russian parliament now enjoys broad support from the deputies. His Chechen nationality and his sometimes authoritative manner had all been obstacles to his election as chairman. Now, many see him as their only bulwark against a hostile government.

But the conflict is not only about politics. The battle of Mr Khasbulatov and others against the government suggests a large personal element. This may reflect rivalry for the ear of Mr Yeltsin. From economists like Mr Khasbulatov, it may also reflect professional envy that others have been chosen for Russia's great experiment.

Arab states braced for trouble after Tripoli riots

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN CAIRO

SECURITY has been tightened in Cairo and other Arab capitals in case yesterday's anti-sanctions violence in Tripoli spills over elsewhere in the Arab world after today's weekly prayers in the mosques.

Arab anger against the United Nations' decision ranges across the social and political spectrum. It has been whipped up by critical articles in the media. Arab officials said that street demonstrations have become a strong possibility in those Arab countries that try to impose the sanctions after April 15.

The UN vote has posed a severe dilemma for President Mubarak, the West's main Arab ally and the leader with the closest ties to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader. With up to a million Egyptians working in Libya and more due to settle on land reclaimed by the Great Man-Made River Project, Libya has provided an important outlet for Egypt's large and destabilising labour surplus.

As the recipient of \$2 billion (£1.1 billion) in annual American aid and the lynchpin of the 1990 Arab coalition against Iraq, Egypt's reaction to the UN resolution will be a crucial pointer to the attitude of the Arab world. Already the opposition press has voiced fury at the UN move, widely seen as an attempt to infringe the sovereignty of an Arab state.

During the Gulf war, students and Islamic fundamentalists who demonstrated opposition to Egypt's Western stand were imprisoned. Diplomats said it was unlikely that opposition to the sanctions could be dealt with in the same way.

Khaled Mohieddin, leader of the opposition Grouping Party, claims that the resolution was tantamount to declaring economic war on Libya and the neighbouring Arab states led by Egypt. "Neither the UN nor the security council is moving to impose any sanctions on a state like Israel, which is rejecting the implementation of scores of resolutions," he said.

Since diplomatic ties between the two neighbours were restored in 1989 after a 13-year break caused by Egypt's peace pact with Israel, Mr Mubarak has tried to restrain Colonel Gaddafi. Senior Egyptian officials claim that in recent months, he has succeeded. They now fear that the sanctions wrangle will encourage hardliners in Libya to organise a new wave of anti-Western terrorism.

Egypt, host to the 21-member Arab League, which is headed by a former Egyptian foreign minister, has been at

Clinton silence ploy cheered

Bill Clinton is at last warming to New York and has found a way to silence personal questions, writes Peter Stothard

BILL Clinton told a television talk-show host that they would have to sit together in silence unless there was an end to questions about his extra-marital affairs. The studio audience cheered and the details of questions about Gennifer Flowers stopped. It was a welcome relief for the Arkansas governor, whose staff believes the rolling "hide of filth" in the New York primary may at last have been turned.

Opinion polls yesterday show no increase in the much-analysed "negative rating" for Governor Clinton. "If it gets no worse than this we can still win both the primary next Tuesday and the general election in November," a senior campaign aide said.

Governor Clinton looks a battered man: anyone who had not seen him since the early days in New Hampshire would have been shocked at the change from vigorous, clear-voiced campaigner to hoarse and pudgy prima donna. His skin is chemo-therapy pink and his eyes vivid. But, as he addressed crowds in Brooklyn and on Wall Street, there was a sense that he was at last warming to New York. The man behind the tabloid headlines did seem to be making a mark.

To reporters' delight, Governor Clinton has so far offended the Italians (by Mafia references to Mario Cuomo, the mayor of New York), the Hispanics (by promoting English as America's language), the blacks and Jewish liberals (by playing golf at a whites-only course) and the Irish (by turning down a party invitation). He has, however, done nothing new to damage himself among white middle-class voters, the mass electorate that sometimes can be hard to find amid the feuding.

"If he can hold that line and stress George Bush's negatives in November, he can do what Ronald Reagan did to Jimmy Carter in 1980," an influential supporter predicted. "Remember how untrustworthy Reagan seemed: people thought he was going to blow up the world, but he was better than Carter."

Mr Clinton's immediate primary opponent is also trying to draw those same mass voters. Jerry Brown's attraction is simple: a vote for him will open up the selection system, stop a suspicious-looking Southerner in his tracks and allow the New York convention to nominate a new set of candidates. Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey is the chattering choice, followed by George Mitchell of Maine.

Mr Brown, however, does not want that to happen.



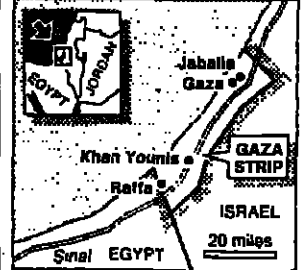
Bare facts: Elizabeth Ward, a former Miss America who posed nude for Playboy, denying allegations that she had had an affair with Bill Clinton

He wants to tear down the walls of the establishment, not promote some of its most complacent and cowardly figures. He is running, therefore, in an opposite direction to the wishes of many who will vote for him.

That is not so hard a task for the former California governor as it might be for other men. The New York Times yesterday, responding to criticism that it was doing less to expose Mr Brown's past than Mr Clinton's, published a set of comments by former colleagues. Among the verdicts were that he is cold, calculating and adolescent; that he is a media manipulator and a 180-degree kid who stretches the definition of chameleon to the limit.

His White House communication director would have to be called "Translator for the Nation," one said. On Tuesday Mr Brown was concentrating on his radical supporters. To an audience of performers, artists, union activists, music producers, Democratic office-seekers and a Great Dane with a pearl-collared, he promised to cut the least that connected political leaders to the money-men who fed them. Gouda the dog in question, whose owner Norman Korpi was trying to inveigle Mr Brown onto a music video, barked enthusiastic approval.

Later, in a bizarre event even for New York, Mr Brown wheeled a supermarket trolley of voter-registration forms in search of the Rev Jesse Jackson, who was pushing a similar vehicle from another part of Soho. Political leaders, unlike those who vote for them, are not experienced



Soldiers stoned in Gaza Strip protest

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN GAZA

THOUSANDS of angry Palestinians took to the streets of Gaza's refugee camps yesterday pelting Israeli security forces with stones and wailing to avenge the scores of casualties caused in clashes on Wednesday night.

One woman was killed when she was hit by an army jeep in Khan Younis, and 22 Palestinian youths were shot and injured when Israeli soldiers attempted to quell the disturbances with live ammunition, plastic bullets and tear gas. Although Palestinian activists allowed the residents a brief opportunity to shop yesterday, in preparation for the feast marking the end of Ramadan, teenagers then began to erect barricades and burn tyres, in a gesture of defiance intended to coax Israeli forces into a fight.

The scenes were reminiscent of the early days of the intifada, which were characterised by demonstrations by unarmed youths. Recently, conflict between undercover Israeli army patrols and small groups of armed Palestinians has been more common. Yesterday, the old tactics appeared to prevail, particularly in the densely populated and depressed refugee camp of Jabalia, where hundreds of youths, many hiding their faces behind masks and scarves, fought running battles with Israeli security forces.

The jeeps that came under greatest attack appeared to be those of the border police, who were responsible for the incident on Wednesday night in the refugee camp of Rafah, in the south, where, Palestinians claimed, men, women and children had been shot indiscriminately. United Nations and Palestinian medical sources confirmed that at least four people had been killed and 70 others injured when paramilitary police chased a car into the crowded market area of the Rafah refugee camp.

Washington: A censored report issued here by the State Department claimed that a "major recipient" of American military assistance, meaning Israel, had broken American law by selling sensitive American military technology to prohibited countries (Martin Fletcher writes).

Later yesterday, however, the State Department was expected to announce that a team of investigators had found no evidence in Israel to corroborate a separate charge that the Israelis had sold Patriot missile technology to China.

Violence feared as Iranian poll nears

CAMPAIGNING for next Friday's single-chamber parliamentary elections in Iran began yesterday amid fears that the way candidates have been selected could lead to violent protests. More than a thousand names have been struck off the list of candidates because of their perceived opposition to President Rafsanjani, who hopes the new parliament will approve urgent economic reforms.

Festivities which have appeared on the streets belong exclusively to the "moderate" association of the Combatant Clergy, which supports the government's intentions of privatising a large part of the economy and improving relations with the West. It is opposed by the Society of the Combatant Clergy, an offshoot which has a majority among the 270 members of the present parliament.

Kim may quit

Tokyo: North Korea's official press has described Kim Jong Il, son and designated heir of the country's ageing leader, as "head of our party, the state and the army," reviving speculation that President Kim Il Sung is preparing to relinquish power. (Reuters)

Police shot

Johannesburg: Two policemen were shot dead and a soldier was wounded by a sniper as armed gangs roamed through Alexandra township, east of here. Residents turned on security forces called in to quell the outbreak of violence.

'Don' arrested

New York: New York prosecutors claimed a clean sweep of alleged top Mafia families after arresting Victor Orena, alleged chief of the Colombo family, as a jury considered the fate of John Gotti, an alleged rival don. Two other alleged dons await trial.

Account frozen

Manila: At Manila's request, Swiss authorities have frozen a bank account of Eduardo Cojuangco, the opposition Filipino presidential candidate, said to contain up to \$4 million, the head of the presidential commission on good government said. (AFP)

Law changing

Kota Bharu, Malaysia: The state of Kelantan plans to implement Islamic law, which prescribes stoning for adultery and amputation of the hand for theft. Islam is the official state religion but the country has been governed by secular laws since 1957. (Reuters)

Feminists attack

Tokyo: K.K. Bestsellers, a Japanese publisher, is under attack from feminist groups for its tour books disclosing where to find prostitutes in Asian nations. Feminists say the company has promised to withdraw Southeast Asia for Men Travelling Alone. (AP)

Pakistan sends aid to Kabul

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN has agreed to send emergency food supplies to Afghanistan on condition that the supplies reach the genuinely needy and are not diverted to government coupon shops.

Having worked to bring down President Najibullah during the 13-year Afghan civil war, Islamabad now sees him as the only bulwark against rising anarchy until an alternative government can be installed. United Nations-sponsored peace efforts are clearly progressing, with Benon Sevan, a special UN envoy who has been trying to persuade the president to step down, returning to Kabul yesterday for the second round of talks with Mr Najibullah in the past few days.

The loss of Mazar-i-Sharif, the second biggest city, to renegade Uzbek government militia has dealt a severe blow to Mr Najibullah's authority. Hairatan, a strategic city on the border of the former Soviet Union, has fallen to Tajik militia. The government also has lost control of the Salang highway, which provides the only overland route from central Asia.

These developments point to growing ethnic fissures within the security forces and the ruling Watan (Homeland) party, leaving Mr Najibullah increasingly isolated.

Caviare and vodka make way for coffee and noodles

THE Vietnamese shop girls speak fluent Russian, and the few customers snapping up basic household goods are Russians and Ukrainians from the nearby naval base at Cam Ranh Bay.

But Cam Ranh is no longer a Russian town. The plastic military helmets on the shelves are made in China, Vietnam's former enemy. The wines and spirits are Vietnamese. So are the coffee and the noodles. Most of the rest of the goods on sale are Thai or Chinese.

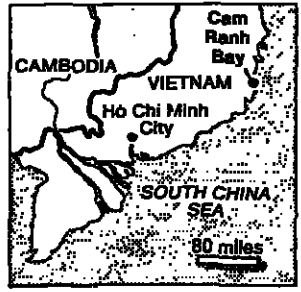
Even the once plentiful caviare and vodka have disappeared. The Russians are leaving Vietnam — almost without a trace. It is only a matter of time before they pull out of the base completely. Konstantin Baykov, the spokesman for the Russian embassy in Hanoi, says a delegation from Moscow is expected to come to Hanoi soon to discuss the timetable for withdrawal with the Vietnamese.

Last September's claim by the Soviet ambassador to the Philippines that Moscow needed to retain access to a naval base in Vietnam to provide some support for the fleet between Odessa and Vladivostok rings hollow today. There are no warships to be seen in the sheltered bay area, where the former Soviet force have been stationed almost since the end of the Vietnam war. Mr Baykov estimates that there are about 500 servicemen at the base, excluding civilian workers, a quarter of the number during the Soviet Union's heyday.

Vietnam is eager to see the Russians go. As early as April 1990, American officials reported that Vietnam had offered to let the Americans back into Cam Ranh Bay once the Russians had gone, although Washington still retains a trade embargo against Vietnam and the two countries have no diplomatic relations.

Vietnamese officials are happy to explain to anyone who will listen that the end of the country's special relationship with the former Soviet Union has brought more advantages than disadvantages, allowing market reforms and ending the burdensome import of inferior goods.

There are still about 2,000 Russians in Vietnam, most of



them working in the oil industry. Cam Ranh, the Russians agree, is a Vietnamese base. The former Soviet forces only have a few facilities there. The gates are manned by Vietnamese sailors, none of whom speak Russian.

The town of Cam Ranh, which was thriving when the Americans occupied the base during the Vietnam war, has declined under the Russians and is now just like any other Vietnamese market town. Only one shop has a sign in Russian.

Valya, aged 20, a shop assistant who has dispensed with her Russian name, says: "There is nowhere to get Russian goods anymore. And no one to buy them. Business is terrible," she said, running her finger across her throat in a gesture easily understood in any language.

The sailors have been confined to base and no longer emerge for their twice-weekly visits into town. Only the civilian workers are still bused from the base to attack the local shopping with an air of quiet desperation, knowing that there will be little to buy when they return to the empty shelves of the former Soviet Union.

Duke takes tunnel trip to France

THE Duke of Edinburgh will today travel through the Channel tunnel from Dover to France on a works train.

The tunnel is to open officially next autumn.

The Paris Opera will broadcast Verdi's *The Masked Ball* on a giant screen at the side of the opera house after being delayed by requests for tickets for Monday's performance starring Luciano Pavarotti.

General Sir Peter de la Billiere, Britain's Gulf war commander, is to publish his account of Operation Desert Storm.

Donald Trump gave "Mother" Clara Hale an 87th birthday gift of \$30,000 (£17,400) for her Harlem charity caring for babies infected with AIDS by their mothers or born addicted to alcohol or drugs.

Singer Billy Idol was fined \$2,000 and ordered by a Californian court to campaign on drugs and alcohol abuse after punching a woman.

Italian conductor Ermanno Florio has been appointed music director of the Houston Ballet from August.

Nkomo defies Mugabe ban on South African contacts

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE



Nkomo: cabinet backs decision on meeting

smashed shop windows to get at a small stock of meat. In Muzarabani, in the north, villagers were reduced to a diet of silt and the pith of the fruit of the baobab tree, according to Ziana, the national news agency.

A South African government spokesman yesterday confirmed that Mr Norman had met Mr Welgemoed in Cape Town on Wednesday. The meeting is understood to have centred on attempts to break the logjam of maize imports into Zimbabwe to relieve looming famine.

Maize meal, the staple food of Zimbabwe's 11 million people, has been drastically rationed. In urban areas crowds have spent days waiting outside shops for supplies to be delivered. In Nkulwane township in Bulawayo, mobs were reported to have

touch with what is going on," a senior Western diplomatic source said.

As a result of the worst drought in Zimbabwe's history and the government's dismissal of warnings last year of an impending food shortage, milling companies are being rationed to a fifth of their normal supplies, leaving both rural and urban areas desperately short of maize meal. Belatedly ordered maize imports have become congested on the rail and road network to Zimbabwe. Half-mile long queues of maize lorries were crawling past the customs post at Beit Bridge on the Limpopo river this week.

Zimbabwean officials even encountered deliberate obstruction from their South African counterparts after Harare last month ordered the withdrawal of an invitation to Kraai van Niekerk, the South African agriculture minister, to attend a meeting in Harare of southern African farming unions, grain industry sources said.

Last weekend Mr Mugabe said: "Those who are rushing now to recognise South Africa after the referendum are being hasty and deceitful."

Windhoek: President Nujoma of Namibia says his drought-stricken country will soon start killing wildlife to provide food for the people. "All natural resources must be utilised to provide food for the needy," he said. (AP)

Bernard Levin

Arms and the man: a tragedy on a North Dakota farm gives an insight into the strength that lies in us all

I am not quite sure whether you should be reading this at breakfast; to be on the safe side you might perhaps have a stiff whisky beside your scrambled eggs. It concerns an 18-year-old youth who was working on his family's farm in North Dakota, when he got tangled in the agricultural machinery; he was near some kind of power system. However it happened, the effect was that the young man tore off both his arms just below the shoulders. Drink the whisky.

Having lost his arms, he kept his head. He staggered to the farmhouse seeking help. Nobody was home and the door was shut. He opened the outer door by bending down, taking the handle in his mouth and turning it; he did the same to the living-room door-handle. Once in the room, he sought and found a pencil; he picked it up in his teeth (not an easy manoeuvre at any time, and positively fraught when the conjuror has no arms), and with it, laboriously tapped out the telephone number of the emergency services. Replenish your whisky.

The ambulance-men came quickly, and the surgeons were ready no less speedily. I have no details of who stumbled across the arms and what he said when he saw them. (Possibly it was, "Well, well, what have we here?") Anyway, the arms were re-attached to the body, which was presumably pleased to see its lost members again; no doubt the young man was even more pleased. Then everybody sat back to see what would happen.

What happened was that some six weeks later our hero left hospital; he had been warned that it was not clear whether the arms would eventually work, and in any case there would have to be more surgery. His *sang-froid* did not leave him; on the steps of the hospital, he made a speech thanking everybody, and concluded with the memorable words "I came here in three pieces and I'm going home in one". He politely refused the use of a wheelchair.

Arma virumque cano. It is no use trying to play the old game: how would we measure in such a situation? The game only works if the supposed events are within credibility, but if the question-master said "Bernard, what would you be thinking while you were chasing round a ploughed field looking for your arms?", I would pass, or more likely pass out.

The youth presumably did not himself know how he would behave in such an emergency; at the age of 18 one does not spend much time wondering how one would cope if one's arms went astray. But this is not a study in youthful psychiatry, nor even a lecture on orthopaedic surgery. It is a hymn to the indomitable human spirit, which this boy demonstrated in no uncertain manner.

Of course it helped that he was young. At that age the determination to survive is very powerful indeed: give someone four or five

more decades and the life-force is not so easy to conjure up. But youth alone will not solve the gory problem; from what depths of will-power did he summon up such fortitude accompanied by such clear-headed ingenuity? Remember that throughout the experience blood was pouring out of his body; loss of blood weakens the injured party rapidly, and with every minute that passed his strength must have been waning.

Human beings can do the impossible, if the determination to do it is powerful enough. There is an organisation called the Mouth and Foot Artists, which is precisely what its name says it is: artists who have lost both arms, or were born without them, paint pictures with the brush held in the mouth or between the toes. (Be warned; they are proud. They will not let you give their organisation money except in return for their work.) For that matter, one of my very dearest and closest friends had laid upon her so many bodily afflictions that Job himself would be ashamed to bemoan his comparatively trivial complaints; yet she lights up any company with her faith-grounded laughter.

We do not know what qualities we have or lack until we are tested to our limit. But surely that boy must have shown, among his family and friends and fellow-students, some kind of exceptional character. There is a rather repulsive procedure in American schools and even universities, in which the student body vote one of their number as "Most likely to succeed". Did he receive such an accolade?

"Man, proud man, - most ignorant of what he's most assured, -" Perhaps our young man was better off not knowing what he was capable of. Perhaps, indeed, we should all be glad to have no inkling of what lies in us; after all, suppose we could tap the source of knowledge but discover that in a coming test we shall fail, and fail ignominiously. A benevolent providence has drawn the curtains close on hero and coward alike; better so.

Still, we have the testimony of a youth in North Dakota to show us that the impossible can be done. And although we are sure we could never emulate him, he gives us all fresh courage, hope and presence of mind; O brave new world, that has such creatures in't! For what is the essence of his achievement? It is one of the greatest of all qualities, and it is one that I believe is steadily dying out: self-reliance. Yes, we are all members one of another, but there are times, many times, when we have nothing but our own bodies, minds and souls with which to challenge and beat down the demons. This 18-year-old, when his moment came, took his mind, his body and his soul into the fiery furnace that is always ready to test us all, and in the assay he was not found wanting. He came out of his day of trial with his mind and soul intact: let us pray that the surgeons' skills will give him back his body, also intact.

'Faced with impossible odds, his survival is a hymn to the indomitable human spirit'

...and moreover
ALAN COREN

Yesterday, I stepped out of Colban's Decor Centre into Willesden Lane carrying a pot of paint. It was the wrong paint.

Do not weep for me, I knew it was the wrong paint. I knew that because it is always the wrong paint. There is no way of getting the right paint any more, now that paint technology has advanced to the point where there are 3,000 shades of yellow, because paint retailers can manufacture any colour you want simply by dropping a blob of this into a bucket of that. Since you want the colour you had last time, this would be a great system if (a) you knew what colour you had last time, and (b) the sun didn't shine. As, however, the sun has shone for five years on the colour you had last time, it is now no longer the colour you had last time, whatever that was. All you can do is chip off a flake of the colour it has now become, hold it against Colban's chart, and when you have a match, go to the expert at the counter and say I want this one but a mite deeper to account for fading, and the expert looks at you for a bit, the way experts do. You then walk out with the wrong paint.

Forgive me, the world does not want my opinion on the national paint situation, it wants my opinion on the national political situation, and I want to give it, but no one will take it, and the national paint situation is almost as close as I can get. Exactly as close as I can get is the national shampoo

situation, but we shall come to that in a bit. For I am in an opinionative mood. We all are. I want to tell people with clipboards which way I am going to vote, because that is the best way there is of affecting the vote. It is even better than voting itself, but nobody with a clipboard is asking me. I do not understand how this can be, since over the past few weeks there have been God knows how many polls, I am not God but even I have managed to tot up 28, and since most of them have had a catchment of around 2,000, this means some 60,000 people have been approached, and God is probably in a position to tell you that the figure is nearer 100,000. In short, maybe 3 per cent of the electorate has shot its mouth off so far, but not only have I not been polled myself, I do not know anyone who has been. Yet here is this large chunk of electorate who have already had their say, and a say, moreover, which has had a significant bearing on the campaigns, and thus on our own say, come April 9. This is all wrong; clearly, there should be polling stations where every one of us can pop in every day to say how we are now intending to vote. Democracy demands it.

But it is not getting it, and as a result a raging desire to be a pollster has welled up in me. I lust for a clipboard. I walk the streets, peering this way and that, but nobody asks me anything. The odds against this are incalculable. I must have passed thou-

sands of people since the present nonsense began, and none of them had a clipboard. Until yesterday, yesterday, I came out of Colban's carrying this pot of wrong paint, and there, on the corner of Willesden Lane and Kilburn High Road, stood a woman with a clipboard. I galloped (genuinely, I do not make cheap puns), lest someone reach her first, she turned, I smiled, and she asked whether I was happy with my present shampoo.

Look at my photograph. Could either of us be less like the person the other needed? I wanted to tell her that I had been using the same shampoo for 13 years, but the promises on the label had turned out to be a pack of lies. I did not have healthy shining hair, my head was getting worse off every day, it was now suffering a major recession, with no sign of a recovery, and don't tell me the rest of Europe is balding faster than I am, what do I care about that, and as to this new shampoo you're representing, what guarantee is there it will do any better, it has had no experience whatever, its claims will turn out to be just another load of old tosh. I might as well buy a bottle of Monster Raving Loony Shampoo, it's probably as good as anything else, and while we're at it, how is it that...

But I didn't. I just took off my hat, and we had a bit of a laugh, and I went home to paint the ceiling the wrong colour. My wife quite likes it, mind; but that's only her opinion.

Martin Fletcher, in Washington, adds up the perks enjoyed by the president

The booty of office

When President Bush was hospitalised with a fibrillating heart last year, Tom Foley, House Speaker and second in the line of succession, briefly experienced the White House lifestyle. Instead of cycling to his early morning workout, he was whisked there by half-a-dozen secret service agents in a three-car motorcade.

Mr Foley may have recalled that episode last month, when President Bush, blaming Congress for his domestic failures, denounced it as a bastion of "perks, privileges, partisanship and paralysis". The Speaker declared war. A puritanical fervour is now sweeping Washington. "Perk patrols" are rampaging through this most status-conscious of capitals in search of the cherished privileges that have long distinguished America's ruling class.

Going or gone are Capitol Hill's free or heavily-subsidised limousines, gymnasiums, gift shops, restaurants, medical prescriptions, haircuts, car washes, parking office flowers and masseurs. Democrats hope to appease public fury at an "imperial Congress" where, it has emerged, hundreds

of the \$125,000-a-year members merrily bounced thousands of cheques at their private bank.

All but essential congressional perks will be eliminated, Mr Foley pledged last weekend. But, he added in his deceptively mild manner, "In fairness, we need to look at the executive branch as well". It was a brilliant diversion. If, as one commentator put it, Congress is a Holiday Inn, the White House is the Ritz. Before the congressional committees that authorise executive expenditure could even start their investigations, the media were in full cry. To a sports fanatic like George Bush, the White House wants for nothing. Its 18 manicured acres contain a tennis court, a swimming pool, an exercise room, a bowling alley, a horseshoe pit, a basketball court and even a newly-installed putting-green with artificial grass.

In the evenings, there is the White House film theatre, or the

presidential boxes, with bars and sitting rooms in all three Kennedy Centre auditoriums. And for weekends, the Camp David retreat in Maryland's Catoctin mountains is only a short helicopter ride away.

Running the White House residence costs about \$7 million a year, with a flower bill alone of \$200,000. The non-political staff number nearly 100, including maids, butlers, doormen, florists (five), gardeners, calligraphers, repairmen and chefs, who, *inter alia*, serve the personal needs of the Bushes. Mr Bush has a \$50,000 allowance for private entertainment.

The president, plus personal steward, travel on a new \$181 million Boeing Jumbo 747 with conference room, operating the plane and 85 telephones. Air Force One costs \$41,000 an hour to run. It is trailed by a back-up 747 and often a military communications plane and cargo plane carrying limousines. A single trip to Califor-

nia can cost \$500,000. In all, 1,360 planes, worth \$2 billion, are available for government use.

The president's aides work incredible hours for modest salaries, but there are compensations. Nine of the most senior have individual chauffeur-driven limousines with leather upholstery and cellular phones (Michael Boskin and Clayton Yeutter, the president's economic and domestic advisers, made these a condition of employment). Others use a pool of 39 chauffeured sedans. They fight to have special secure telephones installed at their homes. Access to the White House mess means mediocre food but insider prestige. Aides can use the presidential theatre boxes and dispense an array of presidential trinkets.

Observers say executive perks are far fewer than in Richard Nixon's day - Jimmy Carter sold the presidential yacht *Sequoia*, for example - but the White House still needs an employee, Rose

Zamaria, to monitor and distribute them. The costs are negligible in the context of a \$400 billion budget deficit, but during a deep recession, the perks infuriate a public already disgusted with its government.

"Most of the perks in the executive branch should be eliminated," declared former President Carter. "Oh balcony, who called the said Barbara Bush, 'a tight ship'?" Judy White House, a "tight ship" deputy press secretary, fielded 102 questions on the subject at a daily briefing. A dozen television crews turned up to film the empty chairs of five White House officials who boycotted a congressional hearing. The committee chairman put annual White House travel costs at \$130 million. Judy Smith refused to give the actual figure, but insisted: "This is not a stone wall."

Meanwhile Time magazine has upbraided Mr Foley, the Speaker. When attending a meeting in London last summer, he and his wife had the air force fly over his and his wife's bikes so they could tour the countryside. "Doesn't he know they rent bikes in England?" asked the air force source.

Peter Riddell says the politicians who prove their fighting spirit will win the trust of the electorate

Three weeks ago as the election campaign began, Michael Heseltine told me he was looking forward with relish to the fight. The touch paper had been lit and... He did not need to complete the metaphor: ever since then he has been filling the election sky with spectacular starbursts and colours like no other Tory. Hearing him speak in Battersea a few nights ago was a theatrical experience, an act of presidential campaign, about whom the wily Lloyd Bentsen remarked "If he is the answer, it must be a very peculiar question."

Some politicians are relieved when it is all over. Though at home in Westminster or Whitehall, many ministers have looked ill at ease campaigning. They have an English sense of embarrassment when forcing themselves on voters - like Keith Joseph, who always seemed half apologetic when canvassing. This campaign has not been William Wadsworth's finest hour. He has sounded defensive even when he has a reasonable case to argue. Similarly, Mr Lamont is not one of life's natural campaigners. Dealt a dreadful hand by his predecessors and by external events, and having little choice but to do what he has done, he has been temperamentally unable to bluff his way out, as Mr Heseltine and Kenneth Baker would. He is too much of a pessimist.

Faces tell a lot, Chris Patten, more a political fighter than his critics reckon, has a revealing face. Last October, he could hardly hide his anxiety and distaste when Margaret Thatcher appeared on the party conference platform and threatened to speak. Now his face shows gloom or delight depending on how the Tories are doing in the polls. The mood in Tory Central Office has fluctuated each evening in line with the latest report. By contrast, nothing ever disturbs the certainty of Mr Heseltine or Mr Clarke. Whatever they feel about the polls, they do not show it.

RIDDELL ON THE ELECTION

Hillhead in 1981 and 1982. But not even he would claim to be an election junkie in the way American politicians have to be. Apart from Tony Benn, there are no British equivalents of Jerry Brown, that weird phenomenon of the current presidential campaign, about whom the wily Lloyd Bentsen remarked "If he is the answer, it must be a very peculiar question."

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It is partly a matter of experience. Many leading Tories, as well as their young staffs, have never known defeat. They have risen only while the Tories have been in government, not during the frustrating years in opposition. They are more anxious about losing office, less stoical about the swings of public mood which may mean a spell in opposition. Apart from Douglas Hurd, and in the background John Wakeham, there are few world-wise figures such as Willie Whitelaw, who was this week in Scotland "stirring up apathy" by combining campaigning with visits to golf clubs.

Although often thin-skinned about criticism, John Major has proved a fighter. Having personal experience of setbacks, he has reacted to campaign reverses by counter-attacking. Clearly he loves speaking from his soapbox, which should be preserved somewhere colleagues face left. "We stay tight, and keep pushing, knowing that it is the side going forward that gets the ball in the case of a scrum."

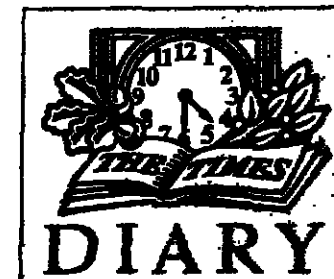
But Mr Kinnock knows that the next six days are his last chance. Labour's public resilience is dependent on the expectation of victory, or least on denying the Tories an overall majority as a first step to office. Anything else would be a shattering defeat.

Back from beyond

IAN MAXWELL may soon be out of the lawyers' clutches and back in business. After several months surviving on an allowance from the administrators, Maxwell has re-employed Anne Walton, his former executive assistant, to help him rebuild his shattered business career. Friends say he is considering a new life in the United States as a financial consultant and that Walton is prepared to go with him and his family.

Maxwell's legal advisers say there is nothing to prevent him leaving the country tomorrow. He still has his passport, and need not seek the permission of a court before travelling abroad. Walton left her post as secretary to the editor of *The European* this week, and resumes her role at Maxwell's right hand on Monday. As he has no business premises, she will work from his Mayfair home. Since Robert Maxwell's death, Walton has remained loyal to Ian, having worked with him for several years, after being poached from a legal firm. Some friends have advised against going back to Maxwell.

Walton, who was always popular with her colleagues, was devastated by the collapse of the empire, and was reduced to tears in public on several occasions. Staff at *The European* are holding a farewell party for her tonight. It is not clear where Maxwell is finding the cash to employ staff, but former colleagues believe the wealthy Chicago based-family of Ian's wife, Laura, is behind the efforts at a new life. Bitter at the way the tabloid press have treated her, Laura has been saying privately since the business crashed that she and Ian planned to leave Britain "at the first opportunity".



● The Times' story about the break-up of Belgium - dated April 1 - certainly convinced foreign office minister, Tristan Garel-Jones. That night he was appearing in a Channel Four discussion on the future of Europe with Labour's George Robertson. As they chatted in the hospitality room before going on air, Garel-Jones said he planned to discuss the "important" story, which had repercussions for the whole of Europe. "Stupidly or generously I suggested he looked at the date," says Robertson. "He still did not believe me, and read it again. Finally the penny dropped. He uttered something your paper would find quite unprintable."

Where's the pole?
AS Labour wrapped itself in as many flags as party managers could find - from the cross of St George to the stars of the EC - only the red flag was absent from Neil Kinnock's triumphalist extravaganza in Sheffield on Wednesday night. The Conservative party, which has tended to regard the union flag virtually as its private property, has been badly shaken by Labour's use of such potent patriotic symbols.
"It looked as if it was the wrong way up, which is particularly un-

fortunate because that is the maritime signal for distress. We've had many calls pointing out this mistake," said a Tory Central Office spokesman.
However, it is the Conservatives who turn out to be wrong: Labour had the broad white band of the cross of St Andrew correctly positioned above the red cross of St Patrick on the left hand side of the flag. But Labour did make one error as it put out more flags than a village hall fête. "The Welsh dragon always faces left," says a Welsh Office spokeswoman. A glance at *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and a call to Debrett's confirms this, but Labour's dragon faces right.

SWP v SPQR
WHAT capitalist crime had delegates to the International Conference on Roman Baths committed to deserve the noisy attentions of the Socialist Workers party? Arriving for a civic reception as guests of the mayor of Bath, where the conference is taking place this



week, the classicists were astonished to find themselves the target of a Trotskyite picket-line. What could it all be about? Per-

haps Nero been posthumously declared a Trotskyite hero and the Socialist Workers were protesting at the bad press the scholars give him? Or could it be a belated protest against the imperialism of the Punic wars? Neither. The protesters had got their classicists and Conservative friends wrong. They thought they were protesting at a Michael Heseltine rally, due to be held in the Pump Room later that evening.

● Jan Morris is setting a new fashion for strange hideaways in Wales. The author's forthcoming book, *Sydney*, claims that she divides her time between her library house in North Wales and a "dolau" in the Black Mountains of South Wales. "Everybody's going to start having them. 'Oh, I've got a dolau in Wales' they'll say. Actually I mean to write 'dacha', because it's a little wooden hut on the side of a mountain." But doesn't she fear trouble with the Welsh Nationalists. "No," she says, "it must be the only second home in Wales that belongs to somebody who lives in Wales."

Corgi toy
THE QUEEN clearly has a keen eye for a well bred corgi, and the attempt to reproduce one of her favourite pets at the "Sovereign" exhibition, which she toured last night, left her distinctly unimpressed. "It is not like any of mine, not from the royal stable," she said as she encountered a model of one of her dogs, fitted with a device to make it appear to be breathing in its sleep.
Bernard Weatherill, retiring Speaker of the House of Commons was unable to perform the opening ceremony properly: someone had forgotten to provide the tape for him to cut.



STRUCTURES OF FREEDOM

Irrespective of the prospect of a hung parliament, constitutional reform is firmly on the political agenda. Yesterday's Charter 88 hosted 120 "Democracy Day" public meetings all over the country and published a poll showing that 68 per cent of the electorate believe Britain's system of government is not working properly. The three parties responded to type: Labour promised an elected House of Lords, a Freedom of Information Act, a charter of rights and new curbs on government appointments; John Major said he refused to countenance proportional representation; the Liberal Democrats talked of little else.

The pity is that PR has become so confused with other reforms. If changes to the voting system could be uncoupled from change to other aspects of the British constitution, there might be more chance of consensus on the latter. Margaret Thatcher's 11 years in power tested a number of constitutional conventions close to if not beyond destruction. These included relations between local and central government, hereditary and other honours, Treasury control of public bodies, quango patronage and official secrecy. Her demerit was a vindication of Voltaire's maxim that the best system of government is "benevolent tyranny tempered by occasional assassination."

Traditionalists, proud of Britain's ability to sustain a democracy without written constitutional rules, used to argue that a five-year test of the electorate was enough to hold the executive to account. Today few voters appear ready to accept that nothing in this respect needs changing. Elective dictatorship is not just an academic cliché, it is an all-too-manifest aspect of Tory centralisation. The Conservatives may have extended consumer choice in certain privatised industries, but they have drastically reduced the pluralism and diversity of the still-large public sector. To examine this trend, and re-examine the checks and balances supposedly encapsulated in the variegated British constitution, can hardly be regarded as recklessly revolu-

tionary. Quite why John Major and his colleagues are so averse to this is puzzling.

Critics of constitutional reform point out that British parliamentary sovereignty means that no constitutional safeguard can ever be entrenched. If Britain were to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into its domestic law, a government with a parliamentary majority could in theory always repeal it. Incorporation would not be watertight, but at least might be water-resistant. Only the most determined government, prepared to defy opinion in its own party, would dare to reverse it. What allowed Mrs Thatcher to defy constitutional convention so easily, for instance with regard to local democracy, was the lack of any articulation of the case against her doing so from within her own ranks.

The best guard against excessive accretion of power to Whitehall is the promotion of alternative sources of power vested with a measure of democratic legitimacy. Combined with a Freedom of Information Act, that would be a powerful discouragement for an executive to behave badly. One such alternative might be a House of Lords with a high proportion of members elected on some franchise distinct from the existing parliamentary one or appointed other than from the ranks of former MPs. Another might be devolution to national and/or regional assemblies. The best evidence of democracy at work in Britain would be, say, a Conservative government in the United Kingdom co-habiting with a Labour-dominated Welsh or Scottish assembly, or with reinvigorated provincial cities enjoying some of the powers of such corporations on the Continent. Thus would pluralism thrive.

The democratic credentials of the British constitution have been leap-frogged by many other countries. After whatever party wins the election, it would be a good moment to reconsider them. All parties should undertake to accept the recommendations of a post-election royal commission. That should keep the Liberal Democrats quiet.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE

The prolonged shufflings through the Elysée prior to President Mitterrand's naming of a new prime minister yesterday have further irritated French voters. Neither the process nor the outcome is surprising. The haggling reflected the dilemma facing the Socialist party, after two resounding defeats in regional elections. The logical response to such a vote of no confidence would have been to find a new leader to restore that confidence before parliamentary elections next spring. But the undisputed leader of the Socialists is not Edith Cresson, the prime minister Mitterrand has shed after ten months, nor her replacement Pierre Bérégovoy, but the president himself.

The logic of last month's collapse in the Socialist vote was Mitterrand's resignation, three years before his second seven-year term expires. Recent polls show that 62 per cent think he should have gone, nearly as many as called for Mme Cresson's departure. In a presidential election, both the party's likely candidates, former prime minister, Michel Rocard, or the European president, Jacques Delors, would stand a chance of defeating the old warhorses of mainstream conservatism, Jacques Chirac and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. New Socialist blood in the Elysée would have given the party a much-needed lift in the parliamentary campaign.

Mitterrand's vacillations this week have suggested not so much the legendary great manipulator as the stumbler of a spent man. He seems to have given not a moment's thought to accepting blame and offering himself as a scapegoat. All else is plastic surgery, a technique in which, as befits a veteran of the opportunistic coalitions of the Fourth Republic, he is a practised master.

To have retained Mme Cresson, his "little soldier" who fought hard to stay, would have been too outright an expression of contempt for the electorate. M. Bérégovoy, sound as

finance minister, will at least give the Socialists ballast in rough seas ahead. But he is hardly a new broom. With this change, Mitterrand has effectively ruled out the seductive option of calling M. Delors to the colours in January, when his term at the EC expires, in order to exploit his honeymoon as prime minister to avert humiliating defeat in the national parliamentary elections.

This old-for-new team must now attempt to recoup some respectability. What is required is not so much new policies as a stable cleaning. "Unemployment is hurting," but M. Bérégovoy's unsocialist monetarism has tamed inflation and set the country on a steady if undramatic course out of recession. Most voters understand that no government would have much domestic leeway in an economy even more closely tied than Britain's to German fortunes.

The new government needs to cure the impression of confusion and impotence in handling social conflicts connected with immigration and the disaffection and violence in France's no-hope city suburbs. But any turnaround there will take time. What most disgusts French voters is government by cynicism and the corrupt stuffing of all the main parties' coffers. Les affaires ranked far ahead of unemployment or even immigration among those — half of all who voted — who picked fringe parties in the regional elections last month. M. Bérégovoy needs to rid his cabinet of the old party "elephants" linked with such scandals.

Nothing that he can do, however, seems likely to restore the prestige of Mitterrand himself. Out of touch abroad, master only of the crafts of personal survival at home, he has become the prime source of the neuroses for which he rebukes his countrymen. Doomed to three more years of political recession, France will be a tetchy member of the European Community just when the EC most needs imaginative leadership.

SUNNY SIDE UP

An Englishman's home is his castle, but for a tinner or a lime mow, he will lower the drawbridge, conduct you into his front room, regale you far into the night with his life's history, and revive you with double egg and bacon in the morning. Bed and breakfast is as traditional as the fry-up it serves. It has spawned its literature: Paul Theroux's *The Kingdom by the Sea* was based on his conversations with seaside landowners with whom he stayed at (then) £5 a night on his perambulations. It deserves a social history on the lines of the magnificent new tribute to that other Great British Tradition *Fish and Chips and the British Working Class 1870-1940*, by Dr John Walton. In the meantime, the Consumers' Association's *Good Bed and Breakfast Guide*, published yesterday, has to be sufficient hymn to its praise.

Tradition, of course, survives in living form only if it adapts to change. The *Good Bed and Breakfast Guide* concentrates on one particular adaptation of the bed-and-breakfast tradition: the move up-market. There are now, it reports, bed and breakfasts with ensuite bathrooms, four-poster beds, expensive fabrics and wallpapers, home-made bread, phones, even faxes, all for £25 a night. This is a good bed-and-breakfast guide, so it does not include another adaptation of the form into the means by which the faded aristocracy seeks to avoid the fate of Micawber. In fading piles, scions of the *ermine* beguile visiting foreigners with the promise of intimacy and the practice of cold rooms, warm drinks, rubber chicken and inflated bills.

That option is not open to everyone. It requires an owner with a title, a historic pile, and a good agent across the Atlantic. But in

John Major's Britain, opportunity is not confined to the upper classes. For many, the phrase "bed and breakfast", as applied to 1992 Britain, summons up a contrasting image. Bed and breakfast is where local authorities send homeless families, for whom, having sold off their stock of council houses, they can no longer provide accommodation. Breakfast here may be vestigial, and bed shared with more people than comfort and hygiene make desirable. But the alternative for the guests is the streets. Social purpose, of a kind, is again being served by the pursuit of profit.

Both this and the new aristocratic form of bed and breakfast survive, alongside the old form. Blackpool enjoys a revived prosperity since the opening of Pleasure Beach offering a surrogate year-round sun. Its boarding houses flourish. Cornish villages are draped still with B&B signs: widows up and down the country still welcome paying guests.

The resurgence of bed and breakfast is happening when hotels are suffering. Recession is hurting the posh country house hotels of the mid 80s. Businesses and businessmen increasingly resent the prices charged for plastic accommodation and plastic smiles by the big hotel chains. Bed and breakfast flourishes by the same method as has long made the prices at French country hotels so reasonable: by using family labour rather than outside labour to keep down costs. In bed and breakfast, even the virtues of Mrs Thatcher's market economy and Mr Major's classier society are met together. Bed and breakfast has saved its bacon by means of micro-economic enterprise; recovery, when it comes, will egg its pudding.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Election 92: urban decay, role of the Church, party leaders' personal faith

From the Reverend E. M. T. Underhill

Sir, One wonders where the Archdeacon of Southwark and the others, whose letter on urban decay (March 31) contains such a tale of unmitigated gloom and despair, have been looking.

I notice that they all come from "south of Watford": certainly they have not seen the situation here in the North-East where, in and around our UPA (urban priority area) parishes, I experience daily new building and improvements to older stock in housing, education, in the National Health Service, in local authority premises, libraries, parks, new roads, bypasses, massive tree and shrub planting, new office blocks and superb new architectural plant on our English Trading Estates, as at Team Valley in Gateshead.

And this is not to mention scores of pit heaps landscaped, with the huge Metro-Centre shopping complex burgeoning on an area of land which a short time ago was a vast tip of coal slack.

Services are not crumbling, as the archdeacon would have us believe. Constantly members of my congregation are — literally — thanking God for new hips, mended bones, home helps, heart bypass operations sooner than expected, attendance and mobility allowances freely provided, choice in education for their children, loving care in old people's homes — the list is never-ending, and I mention only those items which have come my way in the last few days.

It just isn't true, nor good enough, for the archdeacon to suggest that "grave social injustice continues to mar our country". Come north, young man! I'll show you an area transformed, flourishing and in good heart, increasingly so as a direct result of government policies, over the last decade.

Yours faithfully,
E. M. T. UNDERHILL,
St George's Vicarage,
327 Durham Road,
Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

From Mr Nicholas Angel

Sir, The Church is lodged in the world: unless its representatives are to devote their lives to trying to transcend it, and unless they are to ignore Christ's teaching concerning the poor, they are committed to

addressing not only the religious, but also the social and economic needs experienced by society. Nowhere more urgently requires attention than the inner cities.

Mr Heseltine, in a TV broadcast yesterday, dismissed the letter from the Archdeacon of Southwark by insisting that the Church should "stay out of politics". This reveals an ignorance concerning the social mission of the Church and is a denial of the role that religion must play if urban decay is to be reversed.

If the Church was to "stay out of politics" by saying nothing about the pressing social needs of the inner cities, it would not only be renouncing its responsibilities to the world, but failing to fulfil a fundamental aspect of Christian teaching.

Yours sincerely,
NICHOLAS ANGEL,
26 The Grove,
Radlett, Hertfordshire,
April 1.

From Mr David Damant

Sir, The Archdeacon of Southwark and others, in writing to you about their "deep conviction" about the "bankrupt social vision" of the past decade, should not imagine that they occupy the moral high ground. It is certainly possible to argue the contrary.

Over many years the Church has failed to analyse moral and economic issues other than in very simplistic terms. Thus, for example, the moral position and the responsibilities of an individual are complex, and to suggest that the last ten years have seen only "destructive individualism" is to ignore all but one aspect of this complexity.

On economic questions, the commitment of the Church to the idea of "shared humanity" has led to a resistance to change, if the change entailed even temporary unhappiness and financial pressure: the position of the various parties on the miners' strike was an example of this.

Overall, your correspondents show not only that they believe that there are more important things than economic success — which of course there are — but that they will give preference to other values on every possible occasion where a difficult choice has to be made. As a result the pursuit of profitability — that is, the efficient use of capital and other resources — is regarded with suspicion.

Overseas aid

From the Minister for Overseas Development

Sir, Your correspondents from the leading aid agencies (letter, March 20) are right to sharpen the profile of aid as an election issue. The Conservative party will stand on our record — and our plan of action. We are placing three critical issues at the top of the international agenda.

First, good government. We pledge in our manifesto that we will use overseas aid to promote good government, sensible economic policies, the rooting out of corruption, and, crucially, respect for human rights and the rule of law. That is vital if we are to use our aid to best effect.

Second, trade. This is crucial to developing countries because trade brings in around three times as much foreign exchange as aid. The prime minister has made success in the Uruguay Round of Gatt a top priority. The richer countries must open their markets to the developing world.

Third, debt reduction. We are pressing creditor countries to accept the prime minister's proposal — the "Trinidad terms" — for a two-thirds reduction in the official debt of the poorest countries. In all these areas, John Major has taken an international lead.

We accept the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. Ann Cloyd's pledge (letter, March 25) to meet it in the lifetime of a parliament will cut no ice until John Smith owns up to it — and our costings of Labour's pledges. Since Labour's tax plans would destroy the prospects of economic recovery, this pledge is, in any case, academic.

Finally, we will continue the energetic and effective foreign policy which John Major and Douglas Hurd have made their hallmark.

Yours faithfully,
LYNDA CHALKER,
c/o 46 Seaview Road,
Wallasey, Merseyside.

Interpreting polls

From Mr John R. Baker

Sir, Sir Claus Moser's complaint that "it is hard to make much sense of the polls" (letter, March 23) can be reinforced by reference to last May's local government election results. Throughout that election campaign, opinion poll findings were widely cited as authority for predicting that the Liberal Democrats would suffer a net loss of over 500 seats.

When the votes were counted, the result was a net gain of over 500 seats, and they emerged as the controlling or largest party on 20 councils.

It is often said that people are fed up with politicians. Perhaps their real aversion is to pollsters and pundits.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN R. BAKER,
The Hyde, Druid Road,
Menai Bridge, Gwynedd.

Business letters, page 25

The consequent waste of resources is itself immoral; but more fundamentally the lack of insight into the nature of social activity shows a morality of no great depth. In the very short term, an approach such as recommended by your correspondents may help the inner cities. Over time, it will make this and other problems worse, as it has already done.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID DAMANT,
Agar House, 12 Agar Street, WC2,
April 1.

From Mr Tim Montgomerie

Sir, The letter from the Archdeacon of Southwark and others displayed a misunderstanding of the nature of Conservative policy and thought. Conservatives also oppose "destructive individualism" but believe that it can only be tempered by peer, community and familial pressures.

The state has a role, but church leaders too often make the statist mistake of assuming that the only collective which individuals belong to is democratically-elected government. Much more real to people are the natural "small platoons" so loved by Edmund Burke.

In the 1980s Conservatism tried to restate the importance of these vital structures that lie between the individual and government. Empowering parents in education, extending home ownership and reductions in inheritance tax are examples of relevant policy areas.

Yours faithfully,
TIM MONTGOMERIE
(Chairman, Conservative
Christian Fellowship),
46 Baker Street,
Exeter, Devon.

From the Right Reverend Maurice Wood

Sir, Sir Richard Storey's letter (April 1) encourages me to ask questions which would affect the Church of England, directly and tangentially, if Labour should win the general election. Mr Major and Mr Hurd make no secret of their Christian standpoint, but I do not believe that Mr Kinnock or Mr Kaufman take such a stance.

What will happen to the Crown appointment of bishops, let alone deans? After ten active years, before retirement, on the bishops' bench in the House of Lords, I recognise its influence in the country at large. Will

Mr Kinnock value this, or diminish it? Most independent schools have a Christian basis and hold charitable status. What is their future, let alone children from hundreds of our church schools, applying for assisted places?

Sir Richard's letter argues powerfully for asking if a candidate takes a Christian stance, if it is "directly relevant to the story". Before the nation decides which party to support (thankfully they all contain many fine Christian candidates), the Church of England and all the churches should ask Mr Kinnock whether he takes an open Christian stance, or not. His potential patronage would be immense, if he should ever become prime minister.

Yours faithfully,
MAURICE WOOD,
St Mark's House,
Englefield, Reading, Berkshire.

From Mr Tony Clare

Sir, The Archdeacon of Southwark and his co-signatories should not be too depressed about our social vision. On April 9 I shall happily cast my vote in support of a Christian community which requires me to contribute more than 25 per cent of my income to the poor, the sick, the homeless, the old, the hungry, the disabled, those who are destitute, the unemployed and otherwise deprived and for the education of all children in priority to the needs of my own family.

So will everyone else who votes for any one of the major parties, since these items account for over 60 per cent of all our taxes.

Since this is two and a half times more than the tithe traditionally expected from the most virtuous, it should be reassuring for the Bishop of Oxford ("Can a Christian vote Tory?", March 31) to know that we shall also all be voting for a capitalist system which is so substantially committed to serving those most in need.

Yours etc.,
TONY CLARE,
The Old Vicarage,
Chenwood, Buckinghamshire.

From Mr Ray Wilkinson

Sir, Alternatively, can Christians be bishops?

Yours faithfully,
RAY WILKINSON,
6 Kimber Close,
Upper Weston, Bath, Avon.

Origin of radar

From Mr Brian Johnson

Sir, One of the most important broadcasts made from the BBC transmitting station at Daventry, whose closure you report (March 30), was one which no one heard.

It was on February 26, 1935, that Robert Watson-Watt, then director of the National Physical Laboratory's radio research station at Slough, borrowed a BBC "Empire" short-wave transmitter to prove the theory that the wings of a metal aircraft would reflect a significant radio signal to a ground station.

A lumbering RAF bomber, a Handley Page Heyford, flew from Farnborough and set course for Daventry via a field near Weedon where Watson-Watt, his assistant Arnold Wilkins and A. P. Rowe from the air ministry were waiting in the NPL's "travelling laboratory" (a van).

The BBC had agreed to radiate an unmodulated signal on 49 metres and as the bomber appeared, an oscilloscope in the van duly reacted to the reflected signal, tracking the aircraft for some eight miles.

The result of the experiment was the construction of the code-named "Chain Home" radar network which contributed to the defeat of the Luftwaffe in the summer of 1940.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN JOHNSON,
10 California Lane,
Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire.

Bess or Bard?

From Mr B. G. D. Salt

Sir, Your third leader (March 31) states that the Dreshouth portrait of Shakespeare in the First Folio of the plays was published in the year of Shakespeare's death. Shakespeare died in 1616 and the First Folio, for which the portrait was commissioned, was not published until 1623.

If indeed Queen Elizabeth I had any hand in the writing of the plays, this could not apply to any that were written after her death in 1603. The chronology of the plays is somewhat doubtful, but it seems likely that those written after 1603 included *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN G. D. SALT,
Sunny Nook, Maine Avenue,
Port Erin, Isle of Man.

From Mr Terence Feely

Sir, It's obvious, isn't it? Elizabeth I wasn't Shakespeare, Shakespeare was Elizabeth I. Barry Humphries could have done it.

Yours etc.,
TERENCE FEELY,
Garrick Club, WC2.

From Mr G. C. J. Kiang

Sir, ... but can we be sure that Queen Elizabeth I was not really some playwright in drag? Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM KIANG,
24 Coombe Wood Hill,
Purley, Surrey.

seriousness of the complaints involved. Only a small minority of the complaints received by Offer can be described as serious in the sense of concerning, for example, unreasonable delay, discourtesy, avoidable inconvenience, wilful neglect, or a delivery of advice or service below the promised standard.

Finally, the report ignores the sheer number of customer transactions involved. London Electricity, for example, in 1991 had around 30 million customer contracts. In the same period there were 1,549 complaints to Offer about our service, a grievance rate of 0.005 per cent.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BROWN
(Director of Customer Services),
London Electricity plc,
Templar House,
81-87 High Holborn, WC1.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

Consumer complaints

From Mr M. J. Brown

Sir, Your report (March 30) about complaints by customers against utilities is misleading as far as the regional electricity companies (RECs) are concerned.

First, the table with the report purported to show customers' complaints against the RECs rising by 45 per cent from 10,567 in 1990 to 15,264 in 1991. But, as the 1991 annual report of the Office of Electricity Regulation (Offer) makes clear, the total figure for 1990 covers only nine months of the year and should be adjusted proportionately to 14,090 before making comparisons with 1991.

The increase on the adjusted basis was 8 per cent. As roughly two thirds of complaints to Offer are billing queries, that might be considered a lower increase than could have been expected during an economic recession.

Secondly, both the report and the table made much of the alleged

coming riages

OBITUARIES

LORD HAVERS

Lord Havers, PC, Attorney-General, 1979-87, and Lord Chancellor, June-October 1987, died on April 1 aged 69. He was born on March 10, 1923.

LORD Havers left the indelible stamp of his personality on that important area of British public life where the law and politics intermingled. He rose to the peak of the legal profession when he became Lord Chancellor, but he filled that office for only 134 days before resigning on health grounds. Before that he had already made his mark in an unusually long and controversial term as Attorney-General. He held that post for eight years, longer than anyone since 1737.

The lot of any Attorney-General, part lawyer, part politician, the government's chief legal adviser and effectively chief public prosecutor, is never an easy one, and Havers's term, from 1979 to 1987, covered a particularly fraught period of political history.

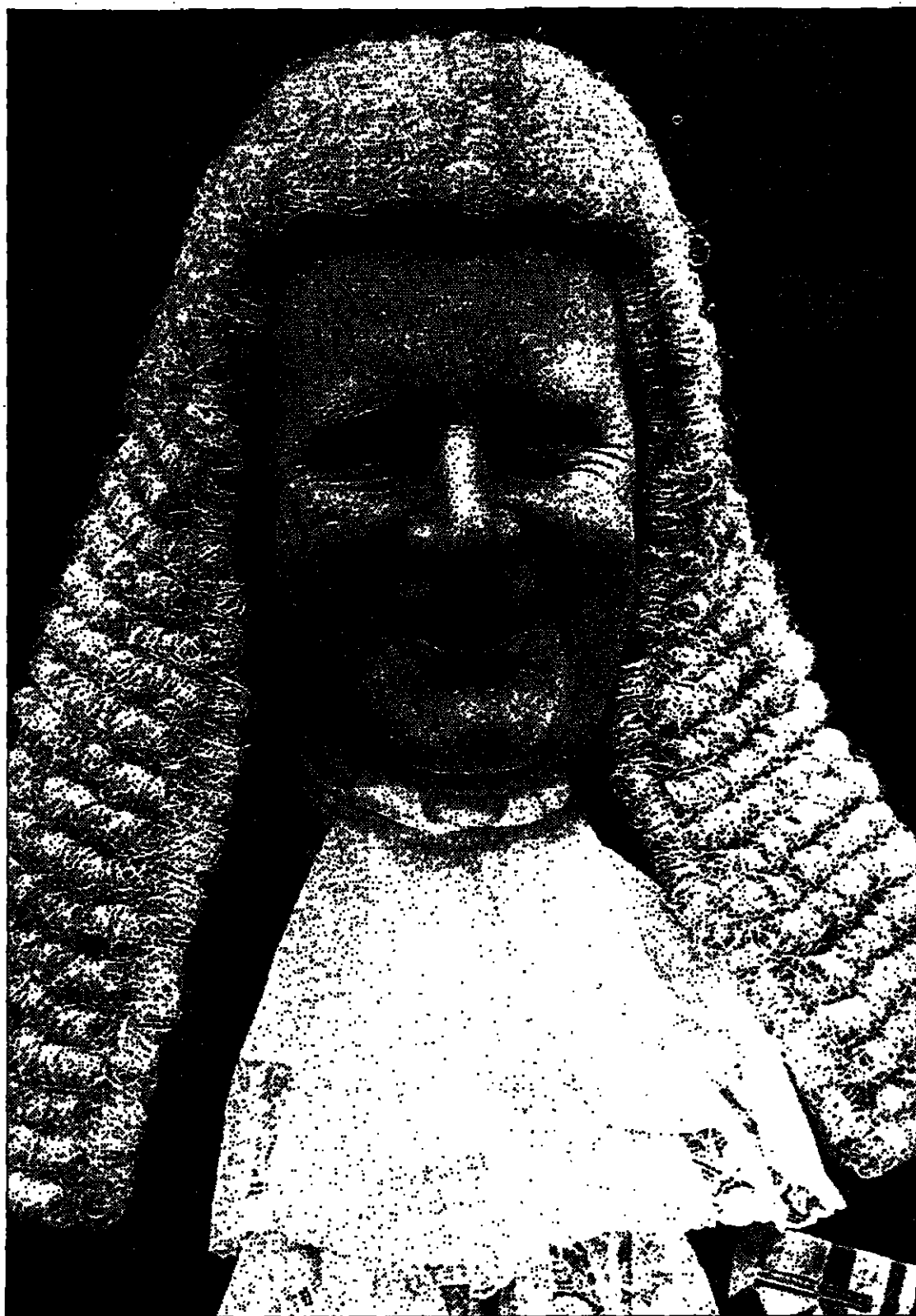
The tensions were not lessened by the fact that he served under a strong-minded prime minister not slow to put a sharp edge to every issue on the politico-legal front: the law on picketing; decisions to prosecute civil servants for leaking confidential information; the international law aspects of the Falklands dispute; investigation of police irregularities; loss of faith in the impartiality of the jury system; the strange legal status of the secret services — it was a testing list of decisions that landed on his desk. He rose to the challenge robustly and with style — and in his relationship with the prime minister, he showed his own strength of mind.

At one level, it has been said, the English Bar has much in common with the theatre. There was an éclat about Havers which would not have gone amiss on the stage. His legal antecedents were impeccable. Robert Michael Oldfield Havers was the son of a High Court judge. His grandfather had been a solicitor and his sister became Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, the only woman to have been elevated to the Court of Appeal. On one occasion Havers and his sister appeared against each other in a court presided over by their father.

Havers was educated at Westminster. During the second world war, as an RNR officer, he served in the Mediterranean, Normandy and the Far East but decided against taking a permanent commission in favour of going up to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1948 at the age of 25 and joined the chambers of Fred Lawton (later Lord Justice Lawton) and Gerald Howard, MP, his pupil master. He served as recorder of Dover (1962-68) and of Norwich (1968-71) then becoming deputy chairman of West Suffolk Quarter Sessions and chancellor of the diocese of first St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, then of Ely. He took silk in 1964 and became master of the bench in 1971.

He entered politics relatively late — which perhaps explained why his instinct when the political side came into conflict with the legal was to give his first loyalty to what he saw as the impartiality of the law. He was first elected as a Conservative MP for Wimbledon in 1970 when he was 47. He succeeded to the safe seat long occupied by Sir Cyril Black, a politician with strong views on moral issues, who may have had a hand in the succession: Havers had written a report (subsequently acted upon) to strengthen the law on pornography, and he acted as counsel for Black when the latter brought a private prosecution against the book *Last Exit for Brooklyn*.

Havers's court appearances were not always, however, in defence of conventional values: another brief was on behalf of the Rolling Stones Mick Jagger and Keith Richards when, in 1967, both were tried for



alleged drug offences at West Sussex Quarter Sessions. As defence counsel Havers confessed to the court: "Sometimes I wonder if all of us in this court are not too old to try this case." That observation did not, in the first instance, help Mr Jagger who was convicted of being in possession of prohibited drugs when the judge ruled that the jury must return a guilty verdict, notwithstanding that the drugs were described as being merely travel sickness remedies which Mr Jagger was taking in the full cognisance of his doctor. On that celebrated occasion the effective defence of Mick Jagger was left to *The Times* whose leader "Who Breaks A Butterfly On A Wheel?" was probably instrumental in leading to the eventual acquittal of both men on appeal.

Havers's tastes and talents were catholic. He had a reputation as something of a bon vivant and was a convivial member of the Garrick Club. His social activities at the club almost led to his downfall as Attorney-General in 1987 when it became public knowledge that he had lunched at the club with the investigative journalist Duncan Campbell in the midst of an attempt by the government to ban a television documentary exposing the secret Zircon spy satellite programme.

Havers was also part-author of a number of books designed for a popular market on sensational cases, including the notorious "Bac-

carat" case involving alleged cheating at cards in the presence of King Edward VII. In 1987 he was a judge for the Whitbread literary awards.

Two years after entering the Commons Havers was appointed Solicitor-General by Edward Heath, succeeding Sir Geoffrey Howe, with Sir Peter Rawlinson (later Lord Rawlinson of Ewell) as Attorney-General.

When the Conservatives went into opposition in 1974 and Mrs Thatcher was drawing up plans for her kind of Conservatism, Havers was closely involved, not least on trade union law, which was one of the biggest issues of the day. When she went to Downing Street in 1979 he joined her government as Attorney-General.

An early source of controversy was a decision not to pursue firms accused of breaking sanctions against Rhodesia. On the legislative side, a major responsibility was the Contempt of Court Bill which, among other things, regularised the position of journalists seeking to protect their sources. He was also centrally involved in Mrs Thatcher's decision to expose, in the Commons, the government's knowledge of Anthony Blunt's traitorous links with the Soviet Union, and in the prosecution of two other traitors, Geoffrey Prime and Michael Bettaney. His most dramatic courtroom success came in 1982 when his cross examination of Professor Hugh

Hambleton, a Canadian economist, culminated in Hambleton confessing in court to passing Nato secrets to the Soviet Union.

Earlier Havers had led for the Crown in the trials of the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four. In November 1981, despite the security precautions that surrounded him, his home in Wimbledon was bombed by the IRA while he and his family were on holiday in Spain. He reacted with aplomb, saying to his wife: "Darling, we seem to have had a slight accident at home."

Meanwhile, wearing his prosecutor's hat, Havers hit the headlines when the "Yorkshire Ripper" came to trial. He accepted a plea of diminished responsibility, but the judge, probably reflecting public opinion, refused to accept it and insisted on a full-blown trial for murder. It was an embarrassment for the Attorney-General, senior member of the Bar — but there were greater embarrassments to come.

Many of them were concerned with official secrets. He prosecuted Sarah Tisdall, the Foreign Office clerk who leaked details of cruise missiles. He was responsible for the unsuccessful case against Clive Ponting, who leaked documents about the sinking of the Belgrano during the Falklands war.

During the Falklands conflict Havers proved a loyal and sympathetic colleague to the prime minister, not

least because he was one of the few ministers who had seen naval service. Her appreciation of him survived even during the most remarkable adventure of his political career, the Westland crisis early in 1986.

He had just undergone a heart bypass operation, and was absent while conflict developed between the two most interested ministers, Leon Brittan (backed by the prime minister) and Michael Heseltine, over the future of the Westland helicopter company. It fell to his deputy, the Solicitor-General, to write to Mr Heseltine with advice on legal aspects of the problem, and passages from this confidential letter, harmful to Heseltine's political case, were published in the media. There was no doubt that the leak, by a civil servant to the Press Association, had been authorised at a high level and had taken place after exchanges between Brittan's department and Downing Street.

Havers returned from his sick-bed to this storm. He was clear in his mind, first, that the breach of confidentiality of a government law officer's letter was a gross impropriety, and secondly that the leak had to be treated as an offence under the Official Secrets Act as much as the one which had sent Sarah Tisdall to prison. When it was hinted to him that he was being unduly legalistic about a piece of governmental Realpolitik, he retorted that unless the leak was taken seriously he would order Scotland Yard into Downing Street next morning to conduct a criminal investigation.

After that, at least one head had to fall. Leon Brittan accepted ministerial responsibility and resigned. Before that, Mr Heseltine had walked out of the cabinet in protest against the prime minister's handling of the dispute. It was widely thought that the whole episode brought the prime minister herself closer to resignation than she ever had been.

Then there was *Spycatcher*. Havers attracted criticism for the determined way that the government pursued the book's author, Peter Wright, in courts around the world, to condemn him for revealing details of his work for the security services. Havers accepted his responsibility, but there was one point in this episode, too, when he found himself in confrontation with Downing Street. When the cabinet secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, was giving evidence in the Australian court, he indicated that Havers had been party to an earlier decision not to prosecute the author of another book on the security services: Havers forced Armstrong to retract. There was also criticism that no action had been taken against individuals who had leaked information to other authors, seemingly with the tacit approval of the authorities.

In 1987 the prime minister showed her loyalty to him by promoting him to be Lord Chancellor, but his health was not good enough for him to continue for long. Retiring from the Woolsack he became chairman of R. J. M. Outhwaite, the Lloyd's underwriters, the Solicitors Law Society and the Playhouse Theatre.

Further embarrassments were still to come, however. The quashing by the Court of Appeal of the convictions against the Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven led to the prosecution team, which had been led by Havers, being criticised for allegedly withholding evidence. But the Home Office announced last September that Havers would not be called to give evidence before the judicial enquiry being conducted by Sir John May.

Lord Havers married, in 1949, Carol Elizabeth Lay. He was knighted in 1972 and created a life peer as Lord Havers in 1987. He is survived by his wife and two sons, one of whom is Nigel Havers the actor. The other, Philip, followed his father to the Bar.

COMMANDER ROY HABERSHON

Roy Habershon, MBE, first head of Scotland Yard's bomb squad and a former CID commander, died in Ware, Herts, from cancer on March 18 aged 66. He was born in Sheffield on May 15, 1925.

ROY Habershon's greatest moment probably came on a cold Friday evening late in 1975. As he walked away from a police command post set up in Marylebone he could hardly contain his satisfaction that the most effective IRA unit seen on the British mainland had been captured without loss of life after a siege lasting almost a week in nearby Balcombe Street on the edge of the West End.

Always noted as a thorough policeman, his day was not done, despite the celebrations. Climbing into his car he drove off into the night to visit the hideouts used by a gang which had terrorised central London and left a trail of murder and bombings behind it.

Habershon, a familiar face to millions of television viewers at the height of the IRA campaign, might never have been in command of the bomb squad but for the good fortune which put him in the right place at the right time. He began his police career in 1946 after war service with the RAF and rose steadily and undramatically during the 1950s and 1960s working at the Yard or outside on police divisions. He earned a reputation as a good leader, winning the admiration of junior officers and maintaining a reputation for integrity and honesty.

In 1971 he was detective chief superintendent covering the Barnet area on the fringes of the Metropolitan police area at the time the Angry Brigade, an alliance of left-wing and anarchist groups, launched a series of bombings aimed at establishment targets. On January 12 two bombs shattered the front door of the Barnet home of Robert Carr, then the secretary of state for employment, and Habershon, as senior local detective, took command of the investigation with a small squad which was to be the forerunner of the bomb squad and latterly the anti-terrorist squad.

Expanded with officers from Special Branch and the Flying Squad, the squad and Habershon were moved to Scotland Yard and placed under the overall control of Commander Ernest Bond.

The Angry Brigade's operations were over by 1972 but the real work of the new squad was just about to begin. In March 1973 the IRA began their first attempt at a large attack in London with a quartet of car bombs outside Scotland Yard, the Central Criminal Court, a

BBC office and an Army recruiting depot off Whitehall. Nine terrorists were later convicted at Winchester crown court which witnessed one of the few times when Habershon's sharp tongue was beaten by an adversary.

Asked by the judge why one of the men had taken part in the bombings Habershon began to reply with the words: "The kindest thing I could say..." when Dolores Price, another of the terrorists, shouted back: "We don't need your kindness Mr Habershon."

In 1974 he was appointed MBE and left the squad for a time. But he returned in 1975 as commander. It was a time when the IRA unit later known as the Balcombe Street gang was devastating London streets in a campaign which had undertaken 50 missions over a period of 18 months, including bombings and shootings. A police operation involving hundreds of officers secretly patrolled the streets nightly as Habershon's men tried to plot the unit's next step in London's West End.

On December 6 the IRA unit changed its arm once too often. Spotted by police heading for Mayfair, some of its members were chased into a block of flats in Balcombe Street where they took an elderly couple hostage and were trapped. The siege provided a dramatic confrontation which was resolved as much by patience as determination. After six days the terrorists gave themselves up, thanks to negotiators who included Peter Imbert, now commissioner of the Metropolitan police.

Habershon moved on to become head of the Yard's serious crimes branch but he did not remain at headquarters. A hard-headed Yorkshireman, always ready to make and defend his case vigorously, he left the senior ranks at Scotland Yard to become a CID commander in north London. He retired in 1980 having earned 23 commendations. He then became a director of the firm Control Risks, advising on security.

He is survived by his wife, Edith, and a son.



MAJOR-GENERAL ABRAR HUSAIN

Major-General Abrar Husain, CBE, died in hospital in Rawalpindi on March 15 aged 74. He was born near Lucknow in 1917.

ABRAR Husain was the senior Allied officer to whom the Japanese forces occupying New Britain in the Solomon Islands surrendered in 1945.

As the son of a distinguished family who had been educated at the Lamington School and Calvin College, Lucknow, he had been in the first batch of "emergency" officers to be commissioned from the Indian Military Academy in July 1940 and joined the 2nd Battalion, 10th Baluch Regiment, a regular battalion that was sent to Malaya and fought well in the disastrous campaign which ended with surrender and imprisonment in Singapore.

The British officers of the unit were sent to work on the Burma-Siam railway. Pressure was brought to bear on the Indian officers to join the Japanese-sponsored "Indian National Army" and encourage their men to do likewise. Three Indian officers, of whom Abrar was the youngest, refused to have anything

to do with the INA, but they encouraged a fourth to join as he was going to die if he did not receive proper medical treatment. He, later, kept the battalion up to date with Singapore news and what he knew of the rest of the world. The INA got very few recruits from 2/10 Baluch.

The Japanese decided to make an example of Abrar Husain and, in December 1942, sent him off with a party of 150 Gurkha "recalcitrants" to New Britain in the Solomon Islands as prison labour. The group found that food and supplies of any sort were even harder to come by than they were in Singapore, so Abrar taught his Gurkhas to steal to survive, a way of life unnatural to them. By 1945 the Japanese were starving, too, and turned to cannibalism.

In September 1945 it became apparent from the demeanour of their guards that something had happened and the news filtered out that Japan had surrendered. So Abrar, the senior allied officer in New Britain, demanded the surrender of the Japanese forces on the island. After some tricky and shifty negotiations, he got it.

All was far from well, however. Communications were



non-existent and New Britain was not high on the list of allied priorities. The last that had been heard of Abrar Husain and his Gurkhas had been when they had been shipped out of Singapore. Ships carrying prisoners were known to have been sunk in

the Pacific and so little hope was held out for their survival. But in December 1945 an Australian force arrived at New Britain and were astonished to find it in allied hands, even if the commander and his men were skeletons in rags carrying Japanese

weapons. The Gurkhas were shipped back to India and a large number of Chinese, who had been prisoners since 1937, were returned to China while air passage was arranged for Abrar back to Lucknow. On the recommendation of the Australians Abrar was appointed MBE.

In February 1946 he rejoined his battalion in Karachi, where it had been reformed by his fellow prison inmate, Lieutenant Ismail Khan. The British officers returned from leave in the United Kingdom in March and Abrar was promoted captain and then major in rapid succession.

When independence (and partition) came in 1947, Abrar had no doubts about his sympathies. He opted to go where his men, Punjabis and Pathans, were going — to Pakistan. In 1948 he passed the staff college examination and went to general headquarters as a staff officer. In 1952 he returned to the staff college as an instructor. In 1956 he went back to GHQ as brigadier in charge of staff duties and in 1965 he was promoted major-general in command of the 6th Armoured Division, a somewhat fancifully entitled force which was really merely an

armoured brigade reinforced by an infantry brigade. However, in the 1965 war with India this force repulsed the main Indian attack, on the salient between Sialkot, the Ravi River and the Jammu border, which was said to have been carried out by an armoured, a mountain and two infantry divisions.

Two years later Abrar had a minor heart attack from which he rapidly recovered, and went back once more to the staff college, this time as commander. But he then had a serious disagreement with GHQ, resigned and turned his talents to industry.

For some time he managed a paper mill but in 1974 he was chairman of the Cement Corporation, one of the biggest companies in Pakistan. But it was not to last. In 1975 he had a very serious stroke on his right side and was unable to speak or to write or, for a time, to walk. Nursed by his beloved wife (a sister of his old colleague, Ismail), he bore his disabilities with fortitude and continued to play a great part in the affairs of his close-knit family until a bad fall a few days before he died. Abrar was a quietly-spoken man with immense inner strength who is remembered with respect and affection.

April 3 ON THIS DAY 1939



The report of Hitler's speech coincided with news of the launching of Germany's latest battleship, Tirpitz, and in this country with the holding of a big recruiting rally in Hyde Park for national service. On this day Europe came a step nearer to war, although it was still five months away.

HERR HITLER'S SPEECH

From Our Correspondent, Berlin

Herr Hitler dealt with the international situation on Saturday in another of those biter, polemical, and threatening speeches which have been the rule with him since last September. It was addressed particularly to Great Britain, which he came near to stigmatising as the eternal enemy of the German Reich. He also came so near to denouncing the Naval Agreement as to leave some listeners in doubt how far he regards it as still valid.

In the centre of his thoughts was the effort of the British Government to obtain through some form of collaboration security for other States against the fate which befell Czechoslovakia. As to that he made the following main points:—

(1) Germany is the judge of what is necessary within her sphere of interests, or her Lebensraum. What happens there is no concern of Britain's.

(2) European States aspiring to Czechoslovakia's role as a military outpost of the Western Powers will find that they have burned their fingers. Germany will not remain inactive in the face of the encirclement danger.

(3) The Reich does not think of making war on other nations so long as these nations leave the Reich alone. But the Reich will not tolerate for any length of time a policy of intimidation or encirclement.

(4) The Naval Agreement is

based on a common desire on the part of the British and German peoples not to go to war again. If that desire no longer exists in Britain, the agreement has been destroyed.

(5) If any nation really wants to measure its strength in violence with the Reich, Germany is at all times ready, resolved, and in the position to meet it.

BROADCAST CUT OFF

Herr Hitler was to have been broadcast as he spoke, but he had said only a few sentences when the broadcast was interrupted. It is assumed that he was afraid of saying in the heat of the moment something which should not be given too wide publicity.

The Führer came quickly to the heart of his subject. The greatest mistake of pre-war Germany, he said, was that it watched Britain pursuing its "devilish plan" of encirclement without summoning up the resolution to destroy it.

Herr Hitler then went on to discredit the morality of British policy by defence of the morality of his own. He recited the inequities of the Treaty of Versailles — a breach of faith under which a great nation was deprived of its rights, and its existence made almost impossible. He declined to agree with foreign statesmen that this "crime" of theirs was to be the law that ruled the world. And when British statesmen said that all problems were capable of solution by discussion, his answer was that there were 15 years for that before he came to power. For the rest, he added, his procedure had been sufficiently justified by success.

"VITAL RIGHTS"

Passing from defence to attack, Herr Hitler complained sarcastically that a halo of virtue did not sit well upon the English in their old age. In 300 years of less respectable youth 46,000,000 of them had brought almost a quarter of the world under their control while 80,000,000 Germans had had to live 140 to the square kilometre.

Business is booming as B&B goes upmarket

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, TRAVEL CORRESPONDENT

THE traditional British bed and breakfast is moving upmarket as cost-conscious businessmen balk at the spiralling price of hotels.

Many B&Bs now have en suite bathrooms, four-poster beds, expensive fabrics and wallpapers, breakfasts including home-made bread and free-range eggs and even telephones and fax machines — yet rarely charge more than £25 per person per night.

The Consumers' Association's *Good Bed and Breakfast Guide* published yesterday praises the standards in many of the 1,000 properties which it says "fill the gap between the very basic guest house and the plush country house type of hotel".

Few of the B&B establishments have fallen prey to the recession, says the guide, in spite of having fewer visitors, the additional cost of the new business rate and fire and health regulations that often demand expensive alterations. Some properties, for example, have even had to remove ancient flagstone floors because they have been classed as "unhygienic" by local health inspectors.

"More and more en suite bathrooms have been added to save guests having to shuffle down the corridor for a wash. Televisions and tea or coffee-making facilities are also *de rigueur* and many other comforts such as hair-dryers, trouser presses, telephones and shoe cleaning kits are becoming increasingly familiar," say the authors of the guide. They give a warning, however, that some owners may go too far and should "perhaps think twice before making a small bedroom a minuscule bathroom by adding a bathroom or shower."

One of the 20 top B&Bs described by the guide is the Church House at Evesham, Hereford and Worcester, which is typical of the sort of property wooing both businessmen and holidaymakers.

Veronica Shaw, who runs the property with her husband, Michael, charges a maximum of £19 per person per night for one of the three guest rooms. "I certainly do not regard myself as running a guest house," she said. "This is our home and it is only by the by that people are paying. We cannot sell alcohol, but we do give a glass of wine to those guests we particularly like. Those we don't get a cup of tea."

The Evesham Hotel, which has 40 rooms, charges £63 per person per night, including breakfast and £88 for a double. It does, however, have an indoor swimming pool and is somewhat eccentric about who is served in the well-stocked bar.

Bed and breakfast in Wales and Scotland provided the best bargains, the guide says, with many charging around £10 a night.

The *Good Bed and Breakfast Guide* (Consumers' Association and Hodder and Stoughton, £12.95).

British astronaut safely back

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL Foale, Britain's first man in space, landed to the salute of two sonic booms yesterday after spending more than a week in orbit on the space shuttle Atlantis.

Dr Foale, a Cambridge graduate, who had wanted to be an astronaut since he was a child, touched down as part of a seven-man crew at the Kennedy Space Centre, Florida, at 12.23pm London time (6.23 local time). His return was watched by his parents, who live in Cambridge, and his wife Rhonda, a space engineer at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston.

The flight was the first in a series of 11 missions planned by NASA, the American space agency, to study the impact of the sun on the earth's atmosphere. Dr Foale, a physicist, was also on board — the first British in space.

"Welcome back to the planet, Atlantis. Congratulations on an outstanding mission," Sidney Gutierrez, a mission controller, told the crew.

The shuttle had blasted off from Kennedy on March 24 after a day's delay caused by technical hitches.



King's head: David Blackmore, Master of the Royal Armouries and Lord General of the Roundhead Association, contemplates the helmet of Charles I's ornate gilt suit of armor, centerpiece of the Roundhead Association's first touring exhibition. The show, marking the 350th anniversary of the outbreak of the Civil War, is sponsored by *The Times* and opens at Hull's Town Docks Museum on April 11

Ashdown rebuffs Kinnock offer of talks on PR

Continued from page 1

day and confirmed, as *The Times* disclosed on March 9, that he would invite the participation of "people from other political parties". Roy Hattersley, his deputy leader, added that it would be an official government enquiry, answering to the prime minister.

Labour is emphasising, however, that there will be no immediate commitment to PR. Mr Hattersley said he hoped the enquiry would look at the Westminster voting system "in a couple of years". He also suggested that it was not likely to be the subject of talks between Mr Kinnock and Mr Ashdown in a hung parliament.

"We are deciding one way or another — it may change it may not — the electoral system for this country for the next 100 years or more. That can't be decided in smoke-filled rooms; that can't be decided on the telephone. We take the constitutional issues seriously and after we have formed a majority govern-

ment we will go on taking it seriously," he said.

"An electoral system which will determine the government of this country for the foreseeable future cannot be cobbled together to the convenience of one political party. Nor can it be the product of backstairs haggling."

Mr Ashdown argued that if the Tories lost their 100-seat majority and Labour failed to win an overall majority for



Ashdown: telling Kinnock to come clean on PR

the fourth time in a row, neither party would have the right to govern as a minority.

He dismissed the prime minister's express refusal to contemplate PR. "I remember Mr Major using almost precisely the same words about the poll tax and it didn't stop him getting rid of it."

The Liberal Democrat leader predicted that Mr Major would be willing to form a coalition with the Liberal Democrats. "I simply do not believe that Mr Major, if he is a democrat, would throw the British people's judgment back in their face by repudiating what they decided at the ballot box," he said.

Mr Ashdown is now expected to gain seats on April 9. He welcomed the Labour and Tory attacks on his party. "That puts us right at the centre of this election," he said.

Election 92, pages 9-13
Peter Riddell and Diary, page 16
Leading article and letters, page 17

Fresh doubts cloud Labour spending

Continued from page 1

sell off all the state holdings. I said that we would complete the sales that are currently in the pipeline... We will have the same receipts from that on-going privatisation... as would be available to a Conservative government."

Last night, the Conservatives challenged Mr Kinnock to clear up the "muddle and confusion" surrounding a "£9.5 billion credibility gap" at the heart of its spending programme.

David Mellor, the Treasury secretary, said that Mr Kinnock appeared to be blissfully unaware of the fact that he would have to order new privatisations to raise the money. He could not sit back and let the cheques roll in. If he did not give the go-ahead, he would have to put 2p on the basic rate of income tax merely to sustain the government's public expenditure programme.

"This is typical of Mr Kinnock's failure to understand anything remotely complex about the manage-

ment of the British economy. When asked whether or not he would take further decisions to privatise, he either did not understand the question or did not want to answer it. Either way he has to clear up the mess quickly," Mr Mellor said.

The government projects £8 billion of privatisation proceeds in the present year and £5.5 billion in each of the following two years. It estimates that £9.5 billion of the two-year receipts of £11 billion would be lost without selling BT and the two power generators. The £8 billion was included in Mr Smith's shadow budget and after Mr Kinnock's interview on *Panorama* the £9.5 billion also appeared to be in the kitty.

In the interview, David Dimbleby specifically asked Mr Kinnock about the "£5 billion in the next year, £5 billion in the next year". The Labour leader replied that "we are not going to deny ourselves the resources that would in any event be coming in with the sales underway".

Tripoli mobs vent fury on missions

Continued from page 1
wrecked and the offices burnt out. The ambassador is now staying with the Spanish nearby.

The two British consular officials working in the Italian embassy, which looks after British interests, reported children parading outside, waving their fists and chanting slogans. Demonstrators also surrounded the French and other Western embassies.

An official at the Russian embassy said police had stood idly by while a crowd of well-organised teenagers attacked the building. "They threw stones, broke our windows and smashed four embassy cars beyond repair," he said.

In front of the Belgian mission, British, American and Belgian flags were set alight. The Belgians represent American interests in Libya. A Western diplomat said plainclothes agents had been seen directing the crowd. "Armed guys with Kalashnikovs were even telling people what size stone to throw."

The Maltese ambassador, who was refused a meeting with the Libyan authorities on Wednesday, was yesterday attempting on behalf of the European diplomats to secure an assurance of their safety, and to remind of its obligations to protect diplomatic missions in Tripoli.

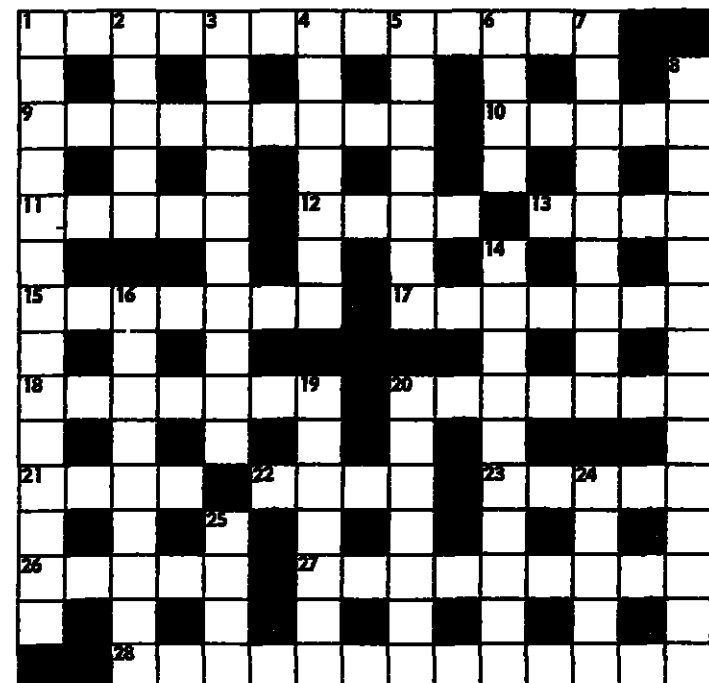
In London, British officials yesterday denied a report by Jana, the Libyan news agency, that the government had ordered foreign diplomats to leave for their own safety. Whitehall officials had always expected that the Libyan reaction "was never going to be a benign one".

The mood in the 5,000 British community was said to be calm. There was no rush to leave Libya, although some had now decided to get out. Exit visas were still being issued, although the situation was still unclear.

British officials yesterday said there was no psychological pressure behind the choice of April 15 as the deadline — the sixth anniversary of the American bombing — for the UN sanctions. The curbs will take effect unless Libya hands over two men wanted for the Lockerbie bombing and co-operates with a French investigation into the bombing of a French airliner in 1989. The date was put back so that it did not clash with the feast marking the end of Ramadan.

Arabs fear spillover, page 15

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 18,883



- ACROSS**
- Book from writer and explorer (9,4).
 - Special sets built — foreign films may need them (9).
 - Fish beginning to bite at head of stream (5).
 - Sea-bird fed by royal command (5).
 - Painter of illustrations for mug (4).
 - Paper's omitted leader backing the House (4).
 - Don't be intimidated by striking clock (7).
 - A cut of beef to enjoy in festive gathering (7).
 - Crime producing young female fatality announced by Scot (7).
 - Sportsman allowed to enter heat, possibly (7).
 - Opponents of US, including the British spy chief (4).

- DOWN**
- Over the side (4).
 - Organize assembly in a state (5).
 - Paris of Open University, in short, having an advantage (3-2).
 - Performance great physician put on inside (5,4).
 - Another visitor, we hear, criticized with hindsight (6-7).
 - Maiden belongs to organized group? That's not true (1,4).
 - Coward holding one end of bomb for explosives expert (5).
 - Stories like this are made up with falsity (5,5).
 - Horshide? (7).
 - Cashier put out of office (7).
 - Foreign churchman born in Lincoln (4).
 - It may be terribly keen, if e.g. sharpened finally (5,4).
 - Experimental means to give one a rise after retirement? (6,8).
 - Correct approach, you'll find, in this puzzle corner (5,5).
 - Vulgar column included by foreign press organization (9).
 - Revolutionary end Reds achieved in China (7).
 - An obsession about the left in Parliament (7).
 - Group of stars regularly appearing in air liners (5).
 - Set of story used in picture after picture (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 18,882

WHISTLEBLOWER
REPUBLICAN
CINEMA
SODA
GALLON
WINDERMERE
INSPECTOR
EXETER
KINGFISHER

Concise Crossword, page 9
Life & Times section

WORD-WATCHING

A daily safari through the language jungle. Which definitions are correct?
By Philip Howard

- MOGGRAPHIA**
a. A cat's paw
b. Writer's scrap
c. Mirror writing
- ESTRADE**
a. A platform
b. A large's kicking jump
c. The East Trade Wind
- PROCTALGIA**
a. A pain in the bottom
b. Favoring cruelty, Sadism
c. Creeping lolly
- XENAPISTIA**
a. Extreme distrust of strangers
b. Complete ignorance
c. The autumn violet

Answers on page 18

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WEATHER

Southern parts of England and Wales will be cloudy with drizzle in places, becoming brighter. Northern parts will be bright and sunny with showers but cloudier in the east, with showers turning wintry in places. Scotland will be cloudy with showers, but brighter in the west and south. Northern Ireland will have bright spells with scattered showers. Outlook turning brighter in England and Wales; cloudier in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

ABROAD		AROUND BRITAIN	
MIDDAY	10-11	Sun	Mon
Algeria	15-25	15-25	15-25
Alexandria	15-25	15-25	15-25
Amman	15-25	15-25	15-25
Baghdad	15-25	15-25	15-25
Bahia	15-25	15-25	15-25
Bombay	15-25	15-25	15-25
Buenos Aires	15-25	15-25	15-25
Calcutta	15-25	15-25	15-25
Cairo	15-25	15-25	15-25
Cardiff	15-25	15-25	15-25
Chennai	15-25	15-25	15-25
Copenhagen	15-25	15-25	15-25
Dublin	15-25	15-25	15-25
Edinburgh	15-25	15-25	15-25
Geneva	15-25	15-25	15-25
Helsinki	15-25	15-25	15-25
Hong Kong	15-25	15-25	15-25
Isle of Man	15-25	15-25	15-25
Jakarta	15-25	15-25	15-25
London	15-25	15-25	15-25
Lyons	15-25	15-25	15-25
Madrid	15-25	15-25	15-25
Manila	15-25	15-25	15-25
Moscow	15-25	15-25	15-25
Mumbai	15-25	15-25	15-25
Nairobi	15-25	15-25	15-25
Paris	15-25	15-25	15-25
Peking	15-25	15-25	15-25
Rangoon	15-25	15-25	15-25
Rome	15-25	15-25	15-25
Singapore	15-25	15-25	15-25
Sofia	15-25	15-25	15-25
Taipei	15-25	15-25	15-25
Tokyo	15-25	15-25	15-25
Ulaanbaatar	15-25	15-25	15-25
Warsaw	15-25	15-25	15-25
Wellington	15-25	15-25	15-25
Yokohama	15-25	15-25	15-25

Concise figures are latest available

TOURIST RATES	
Bank	Bank
Australia	1.50
Belgium	1.50
Canada	1.50
Denmark	1.50
France	1.50
Germany	1.50
Hong Kong	1.50
Italy	1.50
Japan	1.50
Netherlands	1.50
Norway	1.50
Portugal	1.50
Spain	1.50
Sweden	1.50
Switzerland	1.50
Taiwan	1.50
Turkey	1.50
USA	1.50
Yugoslavia	1.50

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Bank of England. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques.

WEATHER

Southern parts of England and Wales will be cloudy with drizzle in places, becoming brighter. Northern parts will be bright and sunny with showers but cloudier in the east, with showers turning wintry in places. Scotland will be cloudy with showers, but brighter in the west and south. Northern Ireland will have bright spells with scattered showers. Outlook turning brighter in England and Wales; cloudier in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

ABROAD		AROUND BRITAIN	
MIDDAY	10-11	Sun	Mon
Algeria	15-25	15-25	15-25
Alexandria	15-25	15-25	15-25
Amman	15-25	15-25	15-25
Baghdad	15-25	15-25	15-25
Bahia	15-25	15-25	15-25
Bombay	15-25	15-25	15-25
Buenos Aires	15-25	15-25	15-25
Calcutta	15-25	15-25	15-25
Cairo	15-25	15-25	15-25
Cardiff	15-25	15-25	15-25
Chennai	15-25	15-25	15-25
Copenhagen	15-25	15-25	15-25
Dublin	15-25	15-25	15-25
Edinburgh	15-25	15-25	15-25
Geneva	15-25	15-25	15-25
Helsinki	15-25	15-25	15-25
Hong Kong	15-25	15-25	15-25
Isle of Man	15-25	15-25	15-25
Jakarta	15-25	15-25	15-25
London	15-25	15-25	15-25
Lyons	15-25	15-25	15-25
Madrid	15-25	15-25	15-25
Manila	15-25	15-25	15-25
Moscow	15-25	15-25	15-25
Mumbai	15-25	15-25	15-25
Nairobi	15-25	15-25	15-25
Paris	15-25	15-25	15-25
Peking	15-25	15-25	15-25
Rangoon	15-25	15-25	15-25
Rome	15-25	15-25	15-25
Singapore	15-25	15-25	15-25
Sofia	15-25	15-25	15-25
Taipei	15-25	15-25	15-25
Tokyo	15-25	15-25	15-25
Ulaanbaatar	15-25	15-25	15-25
Warsaw	15-25	15-25	15-25
Wellington	15-25	15-25	15-25
Yokohama	15-25	15-25	15-25

Concise figures are latest available

TOURIST RATES	
Bank	Bank
Australia	1.50
Belgium	1.50
Canada	1.50
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Hong Kong	1.50
Italy	1.50
Japan	1.50
Netherlands	1.50
Norway	1.50
Portugal	1.50
Spain	1.50
Sweden	1.50
Switzerland	1.50
Taiwan	1.50
Turkey	1.50
USA	1.50
Yugoslavia	1.50

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Bank of England. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques.

WEATHER

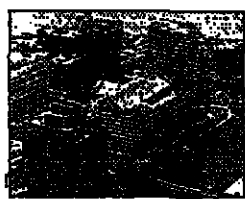
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		MODERATE			
<p>London 7.30 pm to 8.20 am Manchester 7.40 pm to 8.30 am Birmingham 7.55 pm to 8.55 am Manchester 7.48 pm to 8.38 am Manchester 7.58 pm to 8.52 am</p>					
		<p>Sun rises: 6.31 am</p>	<p>Sun sets: 7.30 pm</p>		
		<p>Moon rises: 6.9 am</p>	<p>Moon sets: 3.29 pm</p>		
<p>Yesterday: Temp: max 6am to 8pm, 6C (33F); min 8pm to 6am, 3C (37F). Rain: 24hr 0pm, trace. Sun: 24hr to 6pm, 0.2hr.</p>					
<p>TODAY</p>	<p>AM</p>	<p>HT</p>	<p>PM</p>	<p>HT</p>	<p>TO</p>
London	2.45	0.9	3.9	7.0	10.0
London Bridge	2.50	1.0	2.5	6.1	9.0
Edinburgh	2.70	1.0	3.5	13.0	10.0
West	3.17	1.0	1.1	5.2	8.0
South	3.17	1.0	1.1	5.2	8.0
Southport	3.55	1.3	1.2	3.3	6.0
War	3.25	1.1	1.1	8.3	10.0
South	1.51	4.2	2.0	4.5	6.0
South	1.51	4.2	2.0	4.5	6.0

● BUSINESS NEWS 21-28
● YOUR OWN BUSINESS 29
● INFOTECH TIMES 30,31
● SPORT 32-36

TODAY IN BUSINESS

PROPERTY SLUMP



Canary Wharf is a monument to the worst slump that the property sector has seen. Banks and developers are counting the cost. Page 25

CONFIDENCE VOTE

Hewden Stuart, the plant hire group, has raised its dividend as a sign of confidence although pre-tax profits fell from £25.2 million to £15 million. *Tempus*, page 22

VICTORY



Chelsea's landlord Cabra won a court battle as the football club's chairman Ken Bates bought more Cabra shares. *Sport*, page 36

TOMORROW

PROFILE



Julian Ogilvie Thompson, first non-Oppenheimer head of three South African companies, explains his successes and laments his one failure.

MONEY WATCH

Opinion polls point to a hung parliament. Sara McConnell reports on its significance for investors.

THE POUND

US dollar 1.7302 (+0.0057)
German mark 2.8483 (-0.0032)
Exchange index 89.9 (-0.1)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 1866.6 (-12.3)
FT-SE 100 2405.4 (-3.2)
New York Dow Jones 3248.88 (-0.45)
Tokyo Nikkei Avge 18286.03 (-295.76)

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base 10 1/2%
3-month Interbank 11 1/2%
3-month eligible bills 10 1/2%
US: Prime Rate 6 1/2%
Federal Funds 4 1/4%
3-month Treasury Bills 4.02-4.00%
30-year bonds 100% 100% 10 1/2%

CURRENCIES

London: New York
£ \$1.7314
DM £1.7295
DM £1.7295
SwF £1.5020
FF £1.5705
Yen £1.3383
Index 89.9
EGU £1.75916
ECU £1.35811
London forex market close

GOLD

London Fixing:
AM \$341.25 pm \$340.50
close \$340.35-340.85 (£196.60-197.10)
New York:
Comex \$341.35-341.85

NORTH SEA OIL

Brant (May) \$18.50 bbl (\$18.40)

RETAIL PRICES

RPI: 136.3 February (1987=100)
* Denotes midday trading price

Lloyd's fears repercussions for names

Flaws found in Gooda Walker transactions

By JONATHAN PRYNN

IRREGULARITIES discovered in transactions carried out by one of the biggest loss-making syndicates at Lloyd's could have "odd and damaging consequences" for the names on the syndicate, Alan Lord, the chief executive of Lloyd's, said yesterday.

The irregularities were uncovered by an investigation into Gooda Walker syndicate 290, which has lost at least £100 million through its underwriting of complex catastrophe reinsurance policies.

Ken Randall, the former chief executive of Merrett Holdings, the underwriting group, was appointed to carry out the investigation in December last year by GW Run-Off, a company appointed by

Lloyd's to manage the winding up of the Gooda Walker syndicates.

Mr Randall's interim findings were yesterday lodged in an affidavit at the Commercial Court, which is currently hearing an application by 800 names for an injunction preventing Lloyd's from drawing down on their deposits to pay losses. The case is expected to be concluded before Easter.

Mr Lord said he was "very concerned that the court reached its decision in the light of all the facts available to us".

However, he added that the discovery of the irregularities would not result in a moratorium on cash calls on Gooda Walker names. "Our first obligation is to make sure that valid claims are met. It's the

old principal of pay now, sue later," he said.

Mr Lord described the affidavit as the latest stage in "a developing situation" that could lead to Lloyd's launching disciplinary proceedings "if there are *prima facie* grounds" for taking action.

The irregularities relate to a series of "time and distance" policies bought by Derek Walker, the underwriter of syndicate 290, between 1981 and 1988. Mr Randall was investigating whether such policies had been used artificially by Mr Walker to boost profits, on which a commission could then be taken. In the affidavit, Mr Randall has estimated that between 1981 and 1988 £3.67 million of profit commission was charged to names "which could be regarded as attributable to profits generated by the use of time and distance policies".

However, the affidavit makes clear that Mr Randall has not yet been able to conclude whether the time and distance policies were used improperly or "a proper attempt to ameliorate the cost to names of carrying conservative reserves".

Ralph Sharp, the chairman of GW Run-Off met about 80 member agents yesterday morning to inform them of the discovery of the irregularities. In a letter to the agents, Mr Sharp said: "We very much regret that the situation has developed in the way that it has. We have invested a great deal of effort in seeking to identify with Lloyd's some solution which would help the names but, unfortunately, our efforts have been unsuccessful."

Some Gooda Walker names were yesterday critical of Lloyd's role in the investigation of the Gooda Walker affair.

One name said that he had received a letter from David Coleridge, the chairman of Lloyd's, as recently as last week in which it was written: "I am not personally aware of any artificial insurance policy which has created inequity."

Lloyd's has set up its own loss review panel to investigate the losses of the Gooda Walker syndicates, but this is not expected to report before the summer.

Sun Alliance falls £466m in the red

By OUR CITY STAFF

HUGE losses on mortgage guarantee insurance, combined with high levels of subsidence and theft claims, left Sun Alliance, Britain's biggest general insurer, £466.2 million in the red last year.

The Sun Alliance figures, which were at the bottom end of expectations, provided a spectacular crescendo to a reporting season which has seen all of the major companies report heavy losses. Total losses for the sector in 1991 exceeded £1.5 billion.

As expected the final dividend was pegged at last year's level of 9p, making 14.25p, which, following a small improvement in the interim payment, represents an increase of 2 per cent for the year.

Roger Neville, the group chief executive, said: "1991 was a year which tested the British insurance industry to the full. Our own pre-tax loss reflects not only the impact of recession upon our residential mortgage indemnity business, but also the sharp rise in crime-related claims and another year of subsidence in the UK." Mr Neville said that signs of recovery are now

"clearly visible" in the UK insurance business, although there was a likelihood of "further substantial mortgage indemnity losses".

The level of repossessions is expected to decline this year, and analysts said that Sun Alliance's domestic mortgage indemnity (DMI) losses should fall to about £200 million. Sun Alliance increased its DMI premium rates by 50 per cent in October and is continuing discussions with the major mortgage lenders on rescue schemes aimed at containing losses. Sun Alliance said that "initial indications are that the monthly rate of repossessions has dropped noticeably since the beginning of 1992."

The total loss on the UK general insurance account was £491 million, up from £267 million. Subsidence claims were £117 million. Household theft claims were up by 32 per cent. Net assets ended the year at £1.68 million and the solvency margin fell to 63 per cent. The shares were 250p, unchanged.

Tempus, page 22

Bank 'supporting sterling'

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE pound fell sharply after rumours swept the market of a large sell order from the Middle East and of moves by the Bank of England to brake sterling's fall.

Earlier, the Bank had sent signals through its market operations that helped to reduce pressure for higher interest rates. The FT-SE 100 index closed 3.2 lower at 2,405.4.

For most of the day, the pound drifted lower against the mark as opinion polls less favourable for Labour stilled

market jitters. At the official London close, sterling was down more than a quarter of a penny at DM2.8483. In the next hour, it dropped to around DM2.8450. Against the dollar, however, it ended more than half a cent higher at \$1.7302.

The Treasury said Britain's official reserves decreased by an underlying \$7 million to \$44.3 billion in March. The March data included \$67 million transferred to Estonia and Lithuania in lieu of gold held in Britain when the Bal-

tic states were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

Avinash Persaud, chief currency analyst at UBS Phillips & Drew, expects sterling to trade in a DM 2.8450 to DM 2.8550 range until after the election. The money market's key three-month rate eased almost a quarter-point to 11 per cent, anticipating a half-point increase in base rate after the election.

West German annual inflation accelerated to 4.7 per cent in March, up from 4.3 per cent in February.



Hallowed ground: Martin Edwards, chairman, who made a bullish trading statement, at Old Trafford

PowerGen to shut two coal-fired stations

By ROSS TIEMAN

POWERGEN, the electricity generating company, will soon announce the closure of two more coal-fired power stations with the loss of 275 jobs.

The expected closures are part of a general reduction in surplus capacity by the power industry as it seeks to trim costs in the wake of privatisation last spring. They will follow the closure last week of two of PowerGen's oldest power stations, Hams Hall, and Ferrybridge B.

Castle Donington power station in Derbyshire is the largest of the two stations under threat. The plant, which was built in 1956, has the capacity to generate 604 megawatts and employs 160 people. The other plant earmarked for closure is Drakelow B in Staffordshire. Built in 1959, it is capable of generating 460 megawatts, and has a workforce of 115.

The jobs of a further 285 workers on the site, who operate the neighbouring 1,000-megawatt Drakelow C station are believed to be safe.

The new closures will reduce PowerGen's total capacity from 18,000 megawatts at privatisation to below 17,000 megawatts. However, the company is replacing some of its older plant with more efficient, and less-polluting, combined cycle gas-fired turbines.

The first of the company's new gas plants, a 450-megawatt unit at Killingholme, South Humberside, is expected to come on stream later this year, with a 680-megawatt gas plant at Rye House, Hertfordshire, following in 1994.

Although it will have environmental benefits, the accelerating substitution of gas plant for coal is likely to lead to further job losses among Britain's remaining 44,000 miners.

The generators are expected to replace their coal plant closure plans before existing coal purchase contracts expire next March.

Comment, page 25

OFT says prices of CDs too high

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE music industry and its retailers have taken advantage of the willingness of customers to pay higher prices for compact discs, the Office of Fair Trading has found. Although the cost of producing CDs was now no higher than that of records or tapes, the industry continued to charge premium prices without any commercial justification, the OFT said.

However, Sir Gordon Borrie, director general of fair trading, said he was powerless to act because there was no evidence of excessive profits, and no one in the industry possessed a technical monopoly.

The conclusions, formed after an OFT inquiry, were made public by Sir Gordon in a letter sent to industry leaders yesterday.

They will come as little surprise to many CD buyers. There is likely to be disappointment at Sir Gordon's inability to act. However, the director general made plain that although he planned no action at present, the OFT

will keep the pricing of CDs under close review. According to the OFT, the largest part of the production costs of a CD are in making the master recording, signing fees, artists' advances and royalties, and advertising and promotion costs.

Although the prices at which manufacturers sold CDs to dealers varied little, big discounts were available. In music shops, however, the OFT identified only "some limited price competition".

The OFT said: "CDs were substantially more expensive than cassettes and vinyl in virtually every instance and it appeared to us that the price difference could not be explained by higher production costs in the case of manufacturers, or higher handling and selling costs in the case of retailers."

The OFT, however, found no evidence of collusion between record companies or retailers and despite a careful search, the OFT was apparently unable to be sure where the extra money went.

Man Utd fails to grip City

By MARTIN BARROW

MANCHESTER United are top of the Football League, with a place already booked in this season's Rumbelows Cup final at Wembley, but the club has yet to score with investors in the City.

Its shares, floated on the stock market last year, were unchanged at 278p yesterday, against the 385p issue price despite meeting flotation forecasts and a bullish statement on current trading by Martin Edwards, the chairman. The company, which came to the market to raise funds to rebuild the Stretford End of its Old Trafford ground, has reduced redevelopment costs £1.5 million.

However, in the six months to end-January, pre-tax profits fell from £3.93 million to £3.17 million. Earnings after £750,000 was appropriated from a transfer fee reserve, were 24p a share (28.6p), but United is paying an interim dividend of 6p a share and expects to meet its forecast of total dividends of 17.4p for the year to end-July.

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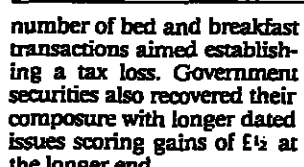
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I am retired / I plan to retire in _____ months

STOCK MARKET

WALL STREET

Turnover of 607 million was again bolstered by a large



The full-year figures from Sun Alliance, unchanged at 250p, made grim reading, but appeared to be in line with most City forecasts. Pre-tax losses grew from £180.9 million to £466.2 million.

extra £24 million of Do It All shares giving it an equal stake in the business which now includes the Payless DIY chain. The proceeds will be used to reduce borrowings of £40 million.

Seaboard, 1p to 229p, Southern, 3p to 214p, South Wales, 7p to 251p, and Yorkshire, 42p to 273½p. The electricity package fell another £10 to £2,278. The power generators saw falls in Scottish Hydro, 1p to 92p.

greatest correction over the first quarter. They said some of the growth stocks appeared set to rebound. But with March unemployment figures due out before today's opening, gains appear limited as many investors sit on the sidelines. (Reuter)

[illegible]

**FROM JOANNA PITMAN
IN TOKYO**

Leaders of the ruling Liberal

The Tokyo stock market has delivered a swift and clear message of dissatisfaction by

Although manufacturing production levels are still decreasing and corporate profits

Some are anticipating a Nikkei index of about 21,000 by the time the March 1993 BIS deadline falls, and will be forced to issue subordinated debt to make up their ratios. Their next problem will lie in finding buyers for their subordinated debt.



The water companies continued to be given the cold shoulder by investors fearing the prospect of rationalisation under a Labour government. Token gains were seen in **South West**, 2p to 337p, and **Wessex**, 1p to 384p while **Southern** held steady at 314p. But there were losses for **Anglian**, 4p to 314p, **Northumbria**, 6p to 349p, **North West**, 4p to 329p, **Thames**, 1p to 334p, **Wales**, 10p to 353p, and **Yorkshire**, 1p to 349p. **Severn-Trent** fell 9p to 201p, after staining analysts that it has been forced by the recession to implement a big rationalisation programme at Biffa, its waste disposal subsidiary, which it acquired from BET last year for £212 million.

MICHAEL CLARK


INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

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Labour muddle on privatisation

Whatever his political hue, the next occupant of No 11 Downing Street will not be blind to the attractions of selling the government's remaining stakes in BT, National Power and PowerGen. John Smith, the shadow chancellor, appeared to contradict Neil Kinnock, Labour's leader, yesterday when he said Labour had yet to decide on the issue. Earlier remarks from Mr Kinnock had been interpreted to signal Labour's willingness to complete the privatisations. Why might that be?

The first imperative would, of course, be financial. Privatisation receipts help moderate Britain's fast-expanding public sector borrowing requirement. In the year just begun, privatisation receipts are expected to reach £8 billion. These will largely comprise instalment payments from purchasers of shares in the Scottish power companies, the regional electricity supply companies in England and Wales, and in BT. In 1993-4, however, only the £835 million third call on buyers of Scottish electricity shares, and some debt repayments, can be relied upon. Yet the Treasury's Red Book forecasts privatisation receipts of £5.5 billion next year and a similar sum in 1994-5. Selling the government's remaining 22 per cent of BT, to bring in £4 billion at current prices, and the 40 per cent in each of the generators, now worth £1.6 billion in total, would help finance any government's capital programme. Labour has a precedent. In 1977, a Labour administration sold a 17.2 per cent stake in British Petroleum.

Fund-raising aside, it would be harmful for government to keep the shares. In both power generation and telecoms, a combination of competition and regulation is beginning to win benefits for customers. A government stake in either sector might be used to restrain market forces and regulatory pressure for change, especially if Frank Dobson, Labour's energy spokesman, has his way and forces government nominees on to the PowerGen board. Such pressure is necessary, especially in the immature electricity market. Thanks to productivity gains at British Coal, which provides most of the generators' fuel, PowerGen says contract power prices have been cut by 6 per cent, in real terms, in the past two years.

The regional supply companies (Recs), however, have swallowed much of that benefit in increased profits. The current-cost rate of return at the ReCs averages 9.5 per cent. At flotation the government envisaged a return of about 6.25 per cent, a whisker above what Sir James McKinnon has concluded appropriate for that other great semi-monopoly, British Gas. The return at the generators is about 3.3 per cent, while the Scots companies are within sight of the flotation target. If the ReCs' returns on their core businesses remain high, the next government, whatever its complexion, will want the regulator to curb them.

That could bring more, and welcome, downward pressure on power prices, though any resulting lower costs might be offset by Labour moves to slow the decline of British Coal by restricting imports, and Labour would need to allow higher returns to the generators to finance the investment in clean coal technology and other anti-pollution equipment that continued high coal use would require.

A similar argument applies at BT, where Mercury and others, abetted by OfTel, the telecoms regulator, are at last eroding BT's monopoly. A government that intends to sell shares in a utility may hesitate to bring full regulatory pressure to bear until it has reaped its windfall. A government that cannot decide upon a sale might hesitate over regulation for ever. That would be to the detriment of the companies, and their shareholders, as well as customers.

Matthew Bond says the severity, spread and duration of the property recession are responsible for the growing damage

Trevor Osborne, the chairman of Speyhawk, was in the sort of philosophical mood that the narrowly averted variety of disaster so often inspires.

"I built up the company from nothing when I knew nothing, but I now have a great deal of experience so it should be easier second time around." Prompting this introspection was the unhappy fact that while 27 years in the property business had left Mr Osborne older and wiser, Speyhawk was once again worth nothing. Indeed it was worth a good deal less than nothing.

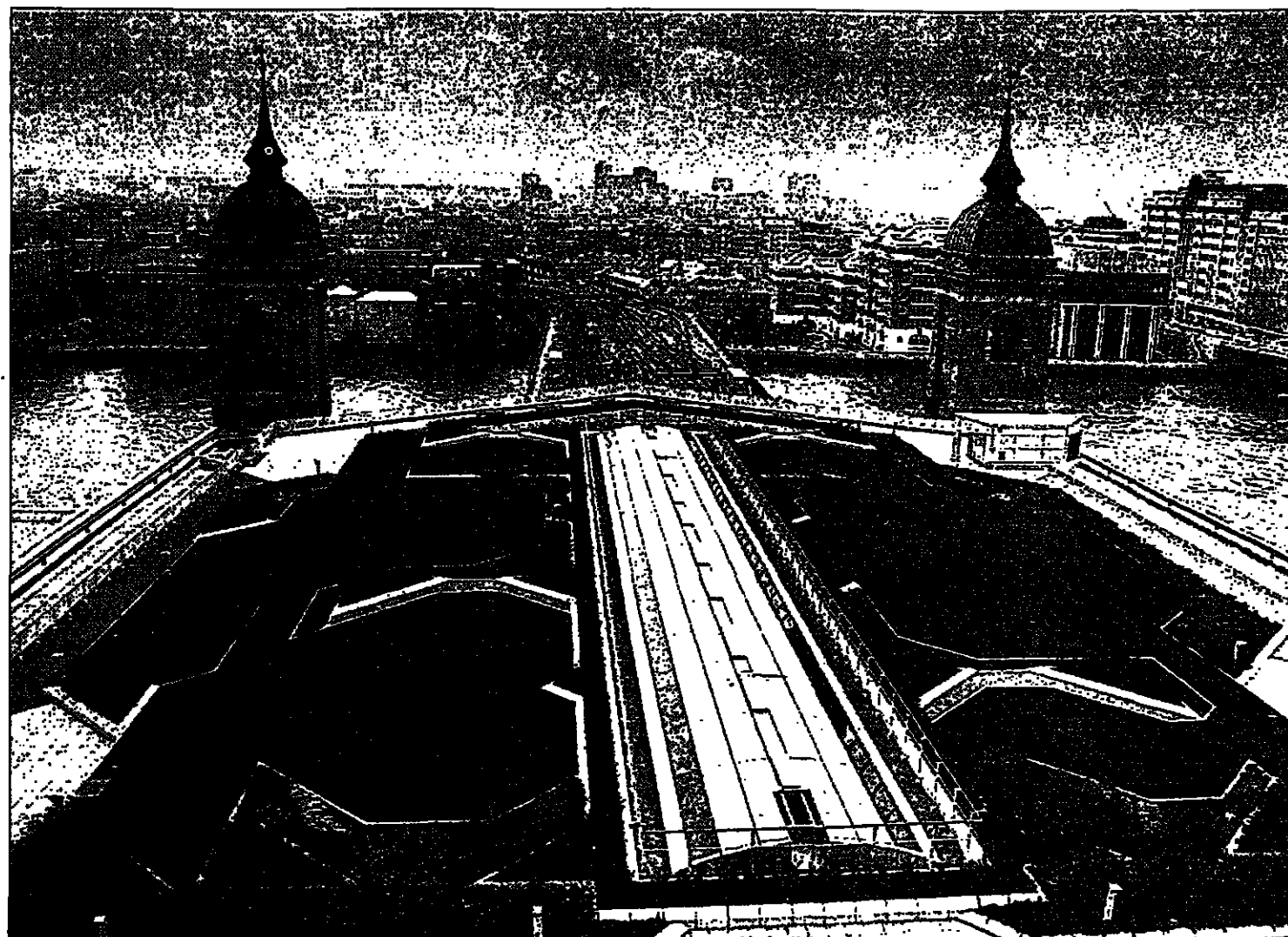
Provisions of £205 million, largely against the value of its City office development portfolio, had resulted in the company, one of the former stars of the property sector, incurring a £217 million loss and a negative net worth of about £70 million. Technically insolvent, Speyhawk's one consolation was that a successful refinancing of £300 million of debt had bought Mr Osborne four years in which to make good the massive damage.

The life support system had been switched on, but there was really no mistaking that the great property crash of the Nineties had claimed another victim. The reaction of the stock market was as interesting as the scale of the Speyhawk losses was alarming. Bar the near 80 per cent fall in Speyhawk's shares, the property sector reacted with a weariness that suggests it is past counting its dead and wounded.

By contrast, the marked reaction of the banking sector points to an area where the serious counting has only just begun. With property companies hauling up the white flag, seemingly on a weekly basis, the damage to banks is promising to be immense. The £40 billion of debt that has dogged the property sector for the past three years may be about to become an ever bigger problem for those who lent it.

Three aspects of the property recession are responsible for the growing damage—its severity, its spread and, perhaps most important, its sheer duration. Each on its own might be survivable. The combination, for many companies, is not. As Gerald Ronson, of Heron International, reminded his staff at the start of the week, the property market is used to cycles. But, he said, there is something different about the current parlous state of the market. "The difference now is that this property recession is deeper than anything that anyone in business today can remember. We have seen nothing like it before."

The problems at Speyhawk are testimony to the severity of the recession, particularly in the devastated City office market. Jones Lang



Home for Life: Speyhawk's Cannon Bridge development, with its rose garden, still has 200,000 sq ft to let

Wootton estimates that vacancy rates in what it terms the "greater City" are already at 18 per cent and should hit an unprecedented level of 20 per cent by the end of this year. With supply far outstripping recession-hit demand, both rents on new lettings and capital values have fallen sharply, with prime rents down by about one-third and values down between 18 and 20 per cent.

That last figure relates to buildings fortunate enough to have a tenant. For buildings still in the course of construction or finished but unlet the damage is far more acute. With the interest charge clock ticking relentlessly, empty buildings are just an invitation to lose money—and lots of it.

Wates City of London, a company with the dual misfortune of both owning and building offices within the Square Mile, provided an indication of the scale of the damage last month, when it wrote down the value of its development portfolio by 44 per cent. This week, Speyhawk faced an even more unpalatable truth, as it became clear that its two big City developments were worth half of what they had cost to build.

Worse still is the damage done by development sites, where the opportunity has been paid for—often in the final heady days of the Eighties—but the process of construction has not yet begun. Speyhawk is unlikely to be alone in making write-downs of more than 75 per cent

against such properties. Every bit as important as the severity of the property slump is its lack of discrimination. When the first signs began to emerge that the property party was over, untold numbers of experts expounded theories about the right sort of property, or the right area to be in, to survive this brief period of adjustment. Now most of those experts are redundant as sector after sector, region after region and country after country have all succumbed to the relentless downward pull. The simple truth is that in this particular slump, there is no hiding place.

Recent events have confirmed that. In Britain, one of the safest bets for riding out recession was industrial property and, to some modest extent, it may have been. Yet, last week, Slough Estates, one of Britain's largest industrial landlords, announced £37 million of development provisions and, but for £52 million of capitalised interest, would have reported a pre-tax loss of £20 million in 1991. A day later, Heron International announced it was holding talks with its bankers over its £1.3 billion of debt. Ahead of this week's meeting, Heron's losses were being estimated at between £100 million and £150 million.

Geographically, the property slide is also gradually becoming all consuming. Canary Wharf, the London

office development, has been widely blamed for the problems at Olympia & York, its Canadian developer. But O&Y's cash-flow problem is as much to do with the severe difficulties its New York and Toronto properties have faced. A company the size of O&Y would take a downturn in one of its principal markets in its stride. Even two should only slow it down. But when all three countries go into sharp reverse, even O&Y has to turn to its banks as it will on Monday.

Last, but not most damaging, is the duration of the property slump. For the past three years, valuers and auditors have valiantly, if imprudently, papered over the ever-widening cracks in property company balance sheets and, latterly, revenue accounts. Now that the slump is well into its third year, with little sign of any early recovery, their collective nerve has cracked. Temporary reductions in value are easily lost in property company results, but permanent reductions demand to be addressed. Hence the sometimes eyebrow-raising difference between end-1990 valuations and their up-to-date counterparts.

Borrowings stubbornly refuse to go away, so the geared impact of these sharp reductions in value can be an even sharper reduction in net worth, often the key component in a banking covenant. Once those covenants are broken, the debt becomes as much a problem for the bank as it is for the property company. Not

that the banks have any more idea how to solve property's problems than the so-called specialists did. All they can do is hope that the level of provisions against their property loan book is keeping up with the fall in property values. Whether the banks have fully appreciated the seriousness and extent of the current situation is a moot point. Past experience is not encouraging.

In the meantime, the banks' approach is simply to extract the best possible terms for a refinancing that gives the property market time to sort the problem out itself. The four years given to Speyhawk to sort out its £300 million of debt is just the latest in a growing line of such deals between banks and desperate clients, including a two-year deal at Rosehaugh, where £310 million of debt is involved, and the five-year refinancing at Brent Walker, where so much of the £1.5 billion of debt related originally to property deals.

Today, Heron will hope to move towards a five-year restructuring of its £1.3 billion borrowings. While on Monday, O&Y executives in Toronto will get down to preliminary talks on what appears to be the mother of all property refinancings with up to \$20 billion of debt involved. Others will doubtless follow. What the property companies get out of such deals is clear. They win time. From the banks' point of view, it is difficult to see such deals as anything but the postponement of massive losses.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

The high price of defence

CITY public relations men, other than those employed by Brunswick and College Hill Associates, the two advisers to Redland and Steeley, were agog last night at the size of the fees reported to have been invoiced for the defence PR work. According to industry sources, College Hill, run by the suave Alex Sandberg—at present away on a family skiing holiday—presented a bill of £700,000 to Steeley's new parent, Redland. It is believed that that bill was subsequently reduced to a figure closer to £300,000 after the deduction of advertising spend—still £100,000 more than might have been expected, even though it was acknowledged to have been a particularly slick campaign. Andrew Grant, of Brunswick, denied reports that Robert Napier, Redland's chief executive, was "tearing his hair out" over the size of the bill. "All the bills have already been paid, in line with contractual arrangements. The Steeley defence cost £10 million and it was up to Steeley's advisers to decide how much to spend on PR and all their arrangements have been honoured. There is no dispute," he said sounding decidedly perturbed.

Offshore diver

THE seven-year itch has finally got to Diana Gourlay, aged 29, who has been trading bonds at Barings for the last three years, after a four-year stint at Hoare Govett. Gourlay, who is footloose and single, is packing her Scuba diving kit and heading for



"I'd like to insure against an increase in premiums"

Florida in May to train as a salvage diver. Colleagues at Barings say they will miss her. According to one, she is "six feet tall and noisy with it". The fish in the Gulf of Mexico had better watch out.

No one's fool

THE 2,800 staff at Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society received an April Fool's gift of a chocolate cream egg to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Andrew Longhurst becoming its chief executive. During his tenure, the society has moved from twelfth largest to sixth largest and its assets have increased tenfold from £1.4 billion to £14.8 billion. At a cost of £700 for the 2,800 eggs—at 28p each—the balance sheet is unlikely to be adversely affected by his celebratory gesture.

Fortune seeker

JOHN Alexander, recovery partner of KPMG, has an unusual rendezvous at Holloway prison this month

with "Lady" Rosie Aberdour, convicted last week of stealing £2.5 million from the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. Alexander has the job of tracking down Aberdour's assets, which include a Bentley, helicopter, grand piano and a wardrobe of Norman Hartnell clothes. Alexander is not unfamiliar with high-profile cases. In 1990, he was responsible for recovering assets of Elizabeth Browne, ex-wife of John Browne, who was the Conservative MP for Winchester, after she agreed to make a divorce settlement payment to her husband.

Trigger for recovery

TOP finance directors, surprisingly unphased by the prospect of a Labour win, are predicting a return to the boom conditions of the Eighties in early 1994, according to a survey of 300 finance directors by Harrison Willis, the legal and financial recruitment consultant. More than 60 per cent are predicting a considerable recovery at the start of 1993, while 98 per cent are looking forward to the return of boom conditions within two years. Hard-pressed businessmen, however, should not become too over-excited by these findings. Harrison Willis admits that in all of its surveys throughout the recession, respondents have tended to focus on an event—currently the election—and have predicted that it will act as trigger for recovery some six months ahead. "It always seems to be six months away," Ken Robson, marketing consultant at Harrison Willis, says.

CAROL LEONARD

Taurus protects the investor

From the Chairman of the London Stock Exchange
Sir, Mr Bear raises some important issues in his letter about the safety of private investments (Business News, March 26).

In designing and developing the Taurus system, both we and the government have considered investor protection as being of paramount importance. The new system does not put securities into nominee names, as Mr Bear suggests. In fact, the system enables all investors to have their names recorded on the company's register more easily and quickly than at present, although many may prefer to continue to use nominees for administrative reasons.

Stealing, as Mr Bear notes, will always be with us. The

BT Chargecard is good value

From the Director of Service Development, British Telecom

Sir, Mr John Kirkwood comments (Weekend Money, March 28) on the pricing of BT Chargecard calls at public phonebox rates. This is indeed the charging basis, as is made clear in all our literature on the BT Chargecard service.

In illustrating this, however, Mr Kirkwood falls into the very trap to which he refers in the other part of his letter, that is the "standard three minute call". By contrast with his example, a one and a half minute phone call is still one unit when dialled direct (approximately 5p, including VAT), while this call with a Chargecard would also be only one phonebox unit (10p, including VAT).

During the past 12 months, we have also removed a 20p service charge per direct-dialled Chargecard call and this has no doubt gone some way to help the doubling of BT Chargecards in use to over a million, and the huge surge in usage. Meanwhile, we have made major investments in expanding the Chargecard system capacity and in improving features for customers, which we will continue throughout the current year.

Yours faithfully,
TONY VARDY,
Director, Service Development, British Telecom, New Garden House, 78 Hatton Garden, EC1.

Letters to The Times Business and Finance section can be sent by fax on 071-782 5112.

Danger of EC 'democratic deficit'

From the MEP for Dorset East and Hampshire West and the Chairman of the Industry Section, EC Economic and Social Committee

Sir, The diagram attached to Wolfgang Münchau's article (Business News, March 13) on European Community social legislation may give a misleading impression. If the Maastricht Treaty and its accompanying Social Protocol are ratified, there will be two legislative routes for "social" legislation but neither will be as indicated on the chart.

Under the Treaty of Rome, both the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee are required to give "Opinions" on draft directives issued by the commission. The commission issues its draft legislation prior to its referral for examination by the European Parliament and Ecosoc, not afterwards as the diagram incorrectly shows. This procedure will remain unchanged. The second route through the "Social Protocol" attached to the Maastricht Union Treaty provides for collective social agreements to be agreed within a nine-month time limit by the social partners. This route would circumvent both the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee entirely.

Who should make up the social partners is not specified but it must be assumed that these will be Unice (Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe) and the ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation). Neither is truly representative of the whole body of European employers and workers respectively but more of the big battalions. If used, this route could lead to the impos-

Self-employed tax

From Mr Alex Cameron
Sir, I am grateful to Anatole Kaletsky (Business News, March 30) for manifesting his opinion that the self-employed (myself included) are only sheep, to be taxed or not at the whim of an incoming Labour chancellor.

However, since his knowledge is so omnipotent, I am slightly puzzled that he is unaware that I will certainly offer my services overseas very quickly, should such an eventuality occur. I would also assure him that I am not alone in this intention. The self-employed generally do not enjoy the luxury of "time and a half" for overtime and are already little motivated on a 40 per cent tax band for extra effort.

I certainly have no intention of, effectively, working midnight shifts for Mr Kaletsky, Mr John Smith, or anyone else, under a circumstance of penal taxation and rapidly diminishing returns. In either event, perhaps Mr Kaletsky should now acknowledge that higher marginal tax rates mean less GNP and less tax collected. They certainly do in my own little economy.

Yours faithfully,
ALEX CAMERON,
15 Hays Mews, W1.

Portfolio
PLATINUM

From your Portfolio Platinum card check your eight share price movements on this page. Add them up to give you your overall total and check this against the daily dividend figure. If it matches you have won outright or a share of the daily prize money. If you win, follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

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4	Dalmeida	Engineering	
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Please take into account any minus signs

Weekly Dividend

Please make a note of your daily points for the weekly dividend of £4,000 in tomorrow's newspaper.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

Two readers shared the Portfolio Platinum prize yesterday, Miss B.M. Goodall, of Manchester, and Mr Bernard Frere, of Wakefield, each receive £1,000.

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Steady performance

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began March 23. Dealings end today. Settlement day April 6. Settlement day April 13. Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days. Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1991/92 High Low Company Price Bid Offer % P/E

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1991/92 High Low Company Price

T&C votes for merger with the Woolwich

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

MORE than 200 members of the Town & Country Building Society questioned its board for over two hours yesterday before voting overwhelmingly in favour of a merger with the Woolwich Building Society.

About a fifth of the society's 220,000 savers voted by post with 44,248 or 98.6 per cent in favour, and only 620 against. Of the 55,000 borrowers 7,051 voted for the merger and 164 against.

Members who travelled to the Connaught Rooms in London were told that the 15th largest society would have to close its doors, cease trading and its assets be liquidated if the merger did not go ahead. This would involve a long wait for payment by members.

After the merger, which takes place at close of business on May 1, savers will receive a 0.5 per cent bonus. Borrowers will be able to redeem mortgages without penalty.

Lord Cornwallis, the 70-year-old chairman of the society, was called on by Andrew Bingham, a solicitor from Leicester, to apologise to the members for the mess the society was in.

Mr Bingham said after the meeting that the society had taken greater risks than other societies by taking on "high-rate, high-risk business and by self-insuring".

The society had not taken out indemnity cover for loans of 80 per cent or more of the value. This indemnity cover is currently costing insurance companies billions of pounds. Town & Country had to stand its own losses. Mr Bingham

also asked Lord Cornwallis about his membership of the committee of a housing association that failed, leaving the society to repossess a housing development.

Lord Cornwallis said he had no personal involvement with the association. It was based in the village where he lives.

An accountant, who did not give his name, questioned the way £3 million of deferred tax asset was carried forward in the accounts. He said that he was considering taking the matter further. Lord Cornwallis was also asked how many of the eight members of the board would be moving to the Woolwich and how many were Freemasons. The answers were none and two: himself and John Castleman.

Town & Country said afterwards that if the £3 million had not been included in the accounts of the society, it would have had to be included in the notes on the accounts as the Woolwich will get the benefit of it.

The rescue of the society was arranged by the Building Societies Commission at the beginning of November when it was leaked that a team of accountants had moved in to investigate the size of its losses.

It made losses of £43 million in 1991 after making provisions of £60 million. The Woolwich plans to close 40 of the 76 branches. A substantial number of the T&C staff will lose their jobs, but their pensions will be safe. Lord Cornwallis said that he had received reassurance on this as late as March 18.

Dawsongroup drives into the black

By PHILIP PANGALOS

DAWSONGROUP returned to profit at year-end, despite difficult trading conditions. Reduced interest costs and improved rental margins helped the truck and trailer rental company to pre-tax profits of £1.13 million in the year to end-December, against a loss of £392,000 last time.

Peter Dawson, the chairman and chief executive, said the result was "a respectable achievement in very demanding circumstances". He added that businesses resisted moves to invest or enter into long-term commitments that led to a 23 per cent fall in new commercial vehicle sales and poor demand for contract hire.

The closure of Dawsoncar was largely responsible for a drop in turnover to £43.7 million, against £48.3 million last time. The rentals division reversed 1990's loss of £993,000, making a pre-tax profit of £982,000, with a 4 per cent rise in revenue despite the "severe" market conditions. Net interest payments were cut to £5.13 million, against £6.72 million.

An unchanged single dividend of 1.5p is recommended for the year. Earnings stood at 2.7p a share, against a deficit of 1.1p last time. The shares rose 8p to 84p.



Outpacing the recession: Peter Dawson, the chairman and chief executive

Homes market slows London & Manchester

By JONATHAN PRYNN

LOSSES on residential mortgage and estate agency operations have pushed pre-tax profits at London & Manchester Group, the insurance and financial services company, down by 4 per cent to £21.2 million for the year to end-December.

John Thomson, the chairman, said: "In overall profit terms, an excellent performance by the group's core life and pensions businesses was diluted by the poor performance of the non-insurance activities."

Profits from life and pensions rose from £22 million to £25.6 million. New annual premiums for the life assurance business were up by 20 per cent. But, the non-insurance activities reported a loss of £2.05 million, compared with a £1.3 million profit. Biggest single lossmaker was the 93-branch residential estate agency chain, which made a trading loss of £2.8 million (£1.4 million loss). The commercial property agency made a small trading

profit. The group is withdrawing from commercial mortgage broking.

A strategic review of the group's residential mortgage activities was carried out earlier this year and the decision taken to restrict new mortgage lending to staff mortgages and further advances to existing customers. The portfolio of loans was £580 million at the year-end. The residential mortgage operations made provisions of £5.7 million against payment difficulties and falling property prices, and incurred a trading loss of £0.2 million (£0.4 million profit).

Commercial mortgage operations made a trading profit of £0.5 million. A net charge of £11.4 million against losses on commercial mortgage and property development loans was made below the line as an extraordinary item. Profits attributable to shareholders fell from £16.6 million to £4 million. A repeat 9.14p final makes 13.572p (13.32p).

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Gardner passes payout

By MARTIN BARROW

DC GARDNER Group, the financial training and consultancy group, is passing its ordinary dividend for 1991 after incurring annual pre-tax losses of £3.76 million. The company is also unable to meet full payment of £250,000 due to preference shareholders because of a shortfall in distributable reserves.

At the time of the £4.1 million rights issue in June, Gardner promised a total dividend of 3.75p a share, against a payment of 4.5p in 1990. However, the company warned that the dividend was under review in December when it announced the sale of ATC Chart, the loss-making accountancy training subsidiary.

There was an exceptional charge of £3.34 million against restructuring and rationalisation costs. Overall loss was reduced to £1.09 million by a £2.41 million surplus on the sale of ATC Chart. The disposal reduced gearing to 40 per cent, compared with 183 per cent at the end of 1990. The company is to apply for court approval of a reduction in the share premium account, eliminating the deficit on the profit and loss account and enabling the payment of an interim dividend for the current year.

Claim by Oyston awaited

By MARTIN WALLER

TRANS WORLD Communications, a local radio operator that ousted Owen Oyston, the Lancastrian millionaire, as chairman last year, is awaiting a £404,000 compensation claim from Mr Oyston. It intends, however, to refuse any payout.

Michael Connolly, finance director, said the company had taken legal advice over Mr Oyston's contract. "The contractual terms aren't such that if he resigned, which he did, he would be entitled to compensation," Mr Connolly said.

Mr Oyston resigned before last July's annual meeting. He seemed certain to lose a vote called by dissident shareholders demanding his departure. Other executives also resigned, including Julian Allitt, the former managing director. The 1991 accounts will reveal that he has settled for £114,000 in compensation. In total, management changes cost £253,000, taken as an exceptional item.

Trans World yesterday announced pre-tax losses for the year to December 31 of £1.15 million, an improvement on the £1.84 million lost in 1990. John Whitney, who replaced Mr Oyston as chairman, said the company looked forward "with guarded optimism" to a return to profit this year.

Li Ka-shing leaves Hongkong Bank

FROM LULU YU IN HONG KONG

LI Ka-shing, head of Hutchison Whampoa group and Hong Kong's wealthiest businessman, is to step down from the board of Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp and parent HSBC Holdings.

The bank said Mr Li, aged 64, had been a non-executive director since 1980 and non-executive deputy chairman since 1985. He was "retiring to devote more time to his other business and personal interests". A spokesman added that the tycoon had wished to step down for some time because he was extremely busy.

Mr Li's departure from the bank comes at a time when the group is under criticism from China for planning to take over Midland Bank, a move that would make it more of a UK-based group



Li Ka-shing: busy than a quasi-central bank of the colony. Peking is concerned that the deal would not benefit Hongkong Bank shareholders, and would shift the bank's assets abroad.

Also retiring from the board of the Hongkong Bank are David Gledhill, a non-executive director since 1988, and Frank Frame, group legal adviser since 1977.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Phone rivals in line for a licence

The competition to provide telecommunications should lower prices and improve the service, Peter Purton writes

The race is on to become Britain's third telephone company. On Monday, Michael Davis, the founder and chairman of National Network, said his company had been promised a licence by the trade and industry department within about a month. More licences are likely to follow soon and should bring lower prices and better service.

The department has received licence applications from 29 companies or consortia since Peter Lilley, the trade secretary, published his white paper on the future of telecommunications last year.

Most of the Tory government's deregulatory success before the white paper had been in areas peripheral to the basic telephone service, such as mobile communications, value-added services and terminal equipment. Promoting competition in the core area has been more of a problem.

BT has steadily reduced prices, but not by as much as telecommunications groups in other leading industrial countries. Some prices have risen above those of European countries that have retained state-owned providers.

Mercury Communications, which was meant to be BT's rival, has not done as much for medium-

sized and small businesses or domestic users as the government had hoped.

The white paper was intended to rectify this, and its first effects, including National Network's pending licence, are beginning to emerge. Mr Davis says: "It is a full licence. We can do everything that BT and Mercury do in Britain."

Previously, Mr Davis founded Windsor Cable Television, one of Britain's most successful cable television network operations and a pioneer in the use of cable connections to feed a telephone service to private households.

Since founding National Network two years ago, he has managed to make a business from reselling telephone and data communications capacity on the Post Office's countrywide private network to middle and large business users, up to 30 per cent more cheaply than BT.

By getting a licence to build and operate his own national telecommunications network, Mr Davis believes he will be able to offer discounts to smaller businesses and eventually, via cable television networks, to home subscribers. By 1996, Mr Davis says, National Network should have 4 per cent of the market for "fixed" rather than mobile telecommunications.

Mr Davis is considering investing £150 million in building a national microwave and fibre-optic infrastructure, linking Britain's 25 large conurbations. "We now operate 30 digital nodes throughout Britain on the Post Office network," he says. "Whenever we see that a route is getting congested we will put in an optical fibre link to substitute for the existing network."

Mr Davis believes this growth, assisted by plans to lease rather than buy hardware wherever possible, will give National Network an edge over rivals such as British Rail Telecommunications (BRT), which also hopes to become Britain's third telephone company.

Peter Borer, BRT's managing director, disagrees. The company lodged an application for a licence similar to National Network's last month. "We already have a substantial business. Last year's turnover was £125 million," Mr Borer says. He admits he has only one customer but that is British Rail, which provides £30 million of revenue from its 10,000 private circuits alone, about 4 per cent of Britain's leased line business.

BT's voice traffic generates another £50 million — 0.5 per cent of the UK market — and BRT also



Looking forward: Michael Davis, the chairman of National Network, who wants his company to be the third telephone provider

operates a data network linking 600 local area networks and supporting 30,000 data terminals, a nationwide mobile radio network with 8,000 users, a national telex network, a fax network, broadcast links and an electronic messaging system for its parent.

At its launch two years ago, BRT said it intended to invest £500 million over ten years, although only a small proportion of this has actually been spent.

Ionica L3, of Cambridge, headed by Nigel Playford, also wants to gain a licence to provide a national telephone service based on fixed radio connections. Millicom Holdings, a subsidiary of Millicom Inc, the American mobile communications company, intends to offer high-capacity information links, also using radio technologies.

The 135 or more cable television network operators believe they have a natural advantage when provid-

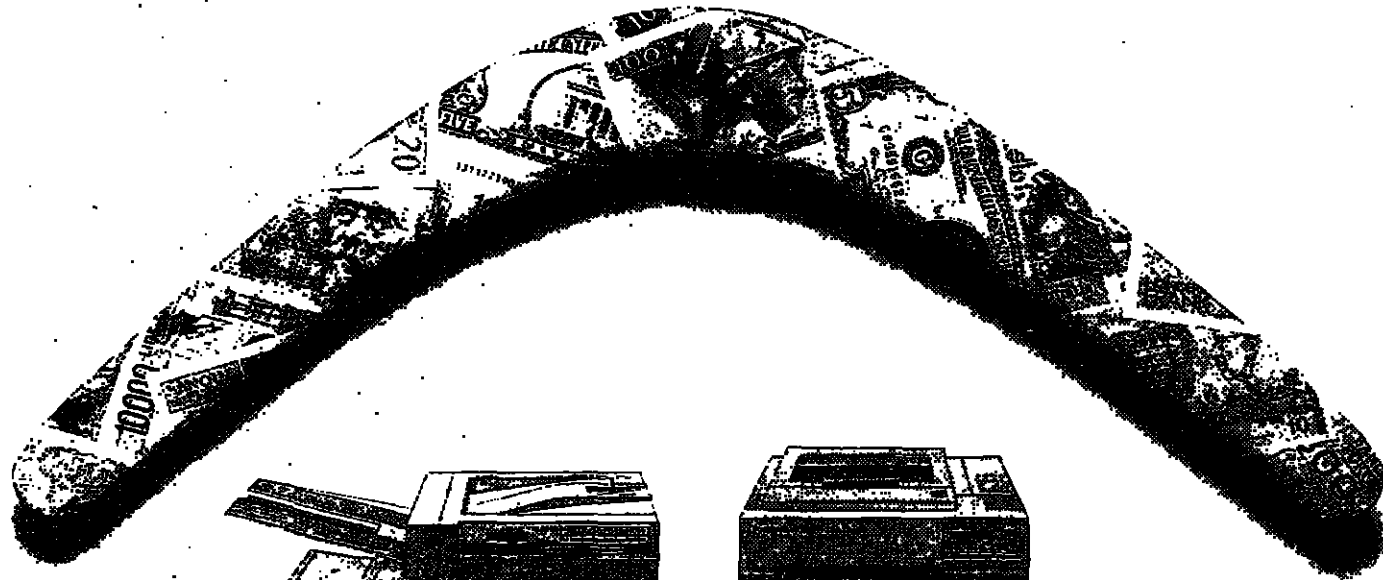
ing the end connection for a telephone service. Many of them, such as Windsor Cable, are already offering telephone services.

Britain's original third telephone company, Kingston Communications, which, by a quirk of history, retained the right to operate the telephone network in the Hull area, wants to broaden its horizons. Since Wednesday Kingston has been the owner of a private telephone system business. This has

given Kingston its first national operation, albeit not as a network operator.

Of the four companies and consortia originally licensed to operate telepoint cordless telephone services, only one survives, and of the three personal communications network licensees only two remain. Even the cellular business has suffered. Not long ago there were more than 70 service providers. Now, there are about 40.

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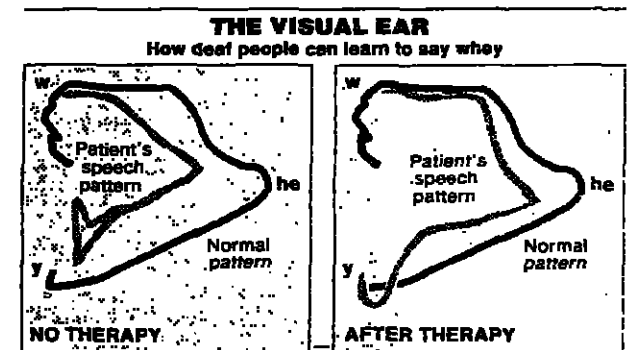
The high-tech elocution

A new computer system that plots speech on screen may aid the deaf

BRITISH engineers have developed a computer system that could help deaf people to speak and students of foreign languages to improve their pronunciation. Using the system, called the Visual Ear, a computer generates deaf people's speech patterns so that they can compare them with normal patterns.

By modifying their speech patterns, deaf people and language students can practise altering the way they produce words to match the acceptable patterns.

The system, on which patents have just been filed, is the brainchild of engineers at the Robotics Research Group in Oxford University's engineering department. The researchers, led by James Reynolds and Lionel Tarassenko, have tested the system with hear-



ing-impaired people and those with normal hearing. The results are encouraging. At the heart of the Visual Ear is a neural network computer system, which attempts to copy the workings of the human brain and has been trained to recognise the features of spoken sounds such as vowels and fricatives.

The computer has been "trained" with sounds made by normal male and female speakers of different ages and with different accents.

When a deaf person speaks into a microphone the computer analyses the speech,

plotting the pattern as a colour-coded line on a screen. The researchers hope the Visual Ear will offer a simpler and more accurate alternative to electropalatography, a technique in which an artificial palate is fitted into a deaf person's mouth and wired to electrodes.

Such systems are cumbersome and costly and offer imperfect clues as to how a deaf person might learn to speak properly because it studies only how the tongue and palate interact.

NICK NUTTALL

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Criminals move into cyberspace

Computer crime is only just starting.
Mick Hurrell informs on the thieves who have found an area of operation that can maximise their chances of success

The hacker and the virus programmer embodied the popular notion of computer crime in the 1980s, and they are still the most widely known criminal acts in computer technology.

The advent of new technologies over the past decade has created a whole new casebook of serious crimes, but they have yet to gain the notoriety of computer viruses such as Friday 13th or Michelangelo.

More than 3,000 computer crimes around the world in the past 20 years have now been documented by SRI International (SRI), a Californian information security consultancy. They include attempted murder, fraud, theft, sabotage, espionage, extortion, conspiracy and ransom collection.

Against this disturbing background, Donn Parker, SRI's senior international security consultant, is telling businesses they will be under increasing attack from sophisticated criminals using computer technology and from others intent on causing disruption.

"New technology brings new opportunities for crime," he says. "We must anticipate future types of crime in our security efforts before they become serious problems."

His prospective list ranges from the annoying to the fraudulent, and includes small computer theft, desktop forgery, digital imaging piracy, voice and electronic mail terrorism, fax graffiti attacks, electronic data interchange fraud, and placement of unauthorised equipment in networks.

Some of these crimes are more obvious than others. The advanced digital imaging systems now being used in the television and film industry to create spectacular special effects, for example, could become a new target for crime. As digital imaging can alter video images seamlessly, the possibilities

for sophisticated fraud are numerous.

The theft of small computers and components has already increased. "I think it will be worse than the typewriter theft problem of the 1970s and 1980s," Mr Parker says. "We are now teaching information-security people that they have to learn how to protect small objects of high value. The content of the computers could be more valuable than the hardware itself."

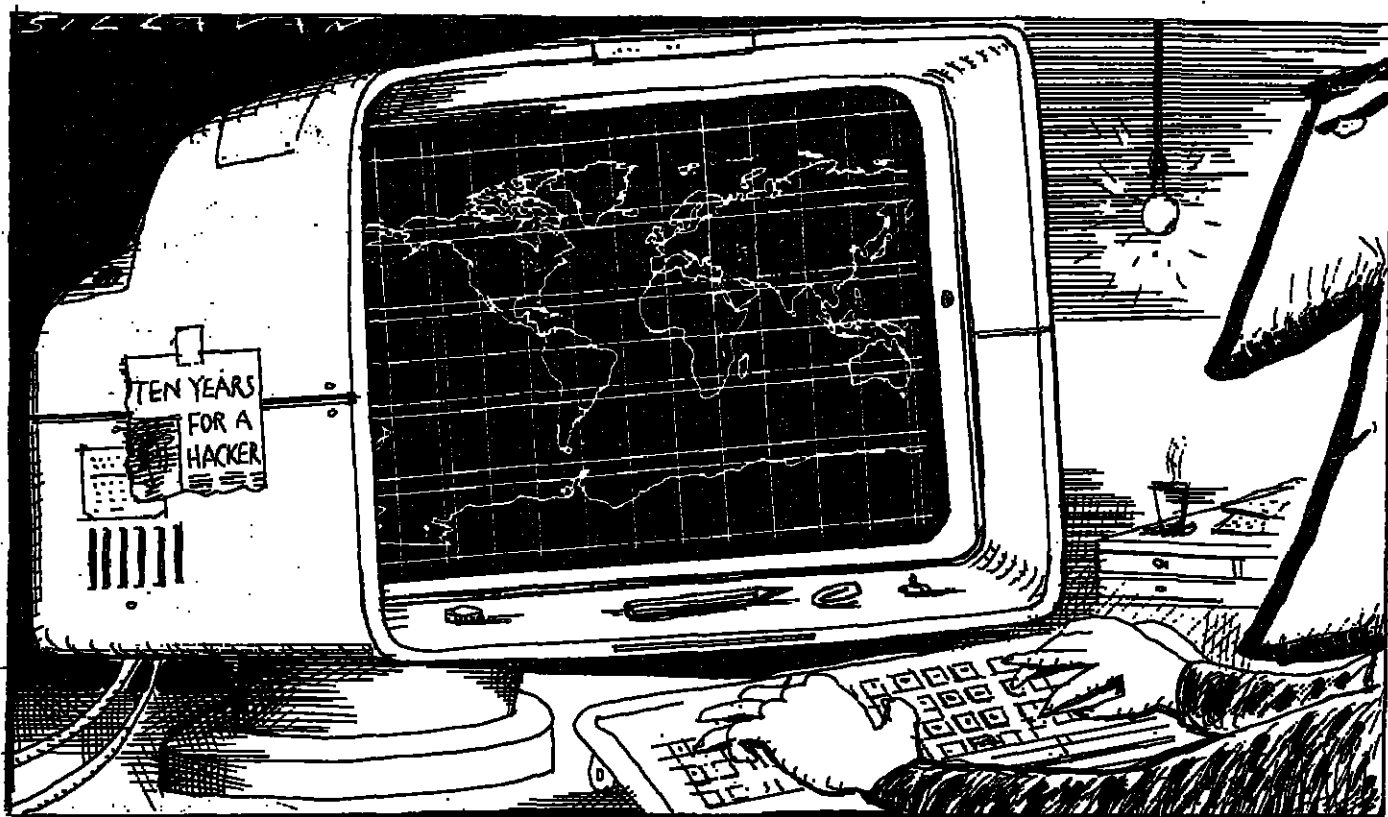
"I do not think the criminal community is yet aware of a computer's value other than on the used equipment market, but ultimately some are going to figure out that the contents — the data — are more valuable, which could lead to information being used for extortion."

Desktop forgery is another crime that looks certain to boom and plague businesses of all types. Desktop publishing software, combined with the latest colour laser printers and photocopiers, is providing an ideal forger's tool. Gone is the dingy cellar with printing plates and press; forgers can work from comfortable offices or their own homes and produce more accurate fakes than ever before.

Original documents can be fed into a computer using a scanner, then subtly altered before being printed out. Business documents such as purchase orders and invoices are obvious targets for the forgers, as are cheques. The quality of a forgery is now limited only by the paper on which it is printed.

Mr Parker says: "As the technology gets cheaper and more available, this is something that could flourish."

But although many of these new forms of computer crime baring with them the possibility of increased business losses, one threat overshadows them all. "The big security



issues are going to involve networks and the connection of computers to many others outside an organisation," says Rod Perry, a partner with Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte, the consultants.

The fear is that sophisticated criminals will take advantage of a clash between the desire for system flexibility and the constraint necessarily imposed by security. Mr Perry adds: "The business need is paramount, and people will accept the risk — up to a point."

Networks are attractive because they allow information to be easily transferred between users, and give free and easy access to data bases from many locations within an organisation that can extend across countries and continents. Making them secure against interference from both outside and within is difficult.

Mr Parker says: "Today's microcomputers and local and global networks have left information security far behind. We are dealing with what we call cyberspace. We are connecting our networks so that we now have a single worldwide network of data communications."

"We have inadvertently freed the criminal from proximity to the crime. A criminal can be anywhere in the world, enter cyberspace by computer and commit a crime anywhere else. The criminal is free to choose the jurisdiction area from which he works, to minimise the punishment if he gets caught."

The great concern, he says, is if technological advances result in an "anarchy of conflicting security efforts. Consistent security practices should be applied uniformly as well as globally."

"When organisations in different countries with different national laws, different ways of valuing information assets and different national ethical customs, use equipment from different manufacturers in their networks, they face the problem of matching their levels of security. They use the lowest common denominator, which in some instances may be practically nonexistent."

Some computer security consultants believe that network security headaches will involve some restriction in how they are used. All agree that passwords no longer offer appropriate forms of security.

Professor Roger Needham, of the University of Cambridge computing laboratory, says: "At the moment, there is a lot of shoddy computer use, but it will become more usual to take security seriously. In the world of doing business with paper, there are a tremendous number of rules of practice and procedure."

Security will be increasingly built into systems and "transparent" to the user. "I think the overall loss to business from computer crime will decrease," he says. "But the loss per incident will increase because the risks and the potential gains will be greater."

Called IDES (Intruder Detection using Expert Systems), it works on the basis that a system intruder is likely to show a different behaviour pattern from that of a legitimate user. IDES is programmed with a set of algorithms that build up profiles of how particular employees typically use the system. It can then inform the company's security division if it identifies any significant deviation.

There is a lot of shoddy computer use

The criminal can be anywhere in the world

Who wants an IT minister?

Systems chiefs have been polled on hopes for a revived ministry

Does Britain need a minister dedicated to dealing with information technology (IT)? Not according to the three main political parties — none of which is recommending in its manifesto the reintroduction of a post that had a considerable up, then a considerable down during its 1981-87 life span.

The closest, though not that close, are Labour's plans for a minister of science, although Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, is known to be personally keen on the topic.

The promotion of IT to ministerial level started in Britain in 1981 when Kenneth Baker prepared a paper outlining the need for just such a position and what it could achieve.

He became the minister and, effectively, his paper on the subject became his job description. In 1984 he relinquished the post to Sir Geoffrey Paine.

Sir Geoffrey's tenure, which also lasted three years, was less productive: cash constraints and a change of government mood resulted in refusals to commit any more money to

IT. In 1987, the post was abolished, and IT moved into the realm of Lord Young, then the trade and industry secretary, who steadfastly refused any requests for its reinstatement.

Yet the subject of a possible IT minister is still much discussed in the industry, at least according to a new poll. Yes, even the relatively arcane discipline of IT director is not immune from election polling. Mori was commissioned by Hewlett Packard, the American computer company, to find out which way the hearts and minds of those who control Britain's information technology will go on election day and what they consider the important topics to be.

Three-quarters of those questioned in 200 organisations want a minister dedicated to looking after IT, while prime concerns for any incoming government were identified as data protection for the individual, computer fraud, health and safety for those using new technology at work, and computer hacking.

There was praise among those polled for the govern-



Kenneth Baker as IT minister: wrote his job description

ment's record in encouraging computer studies in schools and the development of IT in the public sector, although there was also a belief that the government had not invested enough in research and training, encouraging British companies and updating legislation in line with latest developments.

The need for somebody to oversee the technical ramifications of legislation and where it needs updating has been cited as one of the strongest reasons for having a minister committed solely to IT.

The Conservative party is seen as having the best policies on hacking and computer fraud, Labour on health and

safety and training, while the Liberal Democrats are considered best for environmental standards in the production and disposal of materials used in IT.

Perhaps most telling was that most directors and managers questioned had no opinion on which party had the best policy on a range of IT issues.

Whatever their thoughts on IT, voting intentions generally have changed little from the last election: 59 per cent of the directors polled intend to vote Conservative, 23 per cent Liberal Democrat, and 15 per cent Labour.

MATTHEW MAY

Apple's new link

APPLE Computer has signed a long-term agreement with Sharp to develop a new generation of "personal information" equipment.

Under the agreement, the companies plan to merge Apple's computer expertise with Sharp's experience in making small electronic devices that display information on liquid-crystal screens. The aim is to produce pocket-sized electronic devices that combine the functions of today's personal computers with those of tiny consumer electronics devices, such as pocket organisers.

If these devices were hooked up to a wireless communications system, they could allow people to link with news reports, stock prices and other information available from computer databases. They could also eventually replace portable phones.

Partly true?

A COMPUTER model of the Red Sea suggests that its peering described by the Bible could have been caused by strong winds that pushed water away from the shoreline, according to a study conducted by Professor Doron Nof of Florida State University and Professor Nathan Paldor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The model recreated a crossing site at the northern edge of the Gulf of Suez, just north of the Red Sea and concluded



that the potential result of 40-45mph winds blowing over the site for 10-12 hours — much like the biblical account of the night before the parting — could have caused a narrow passage that could be crossed on foot.

PC show

THE Which Computer show, Britain's annual exhibition for personal computer users, takes place at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham next week, from Tuesday to Friday. Free tickets are available from 081-984 7733. A special report on personal computers will appear in *The Times* on the first day of the show.

Film plan

KODAK is collaborating with four Japanese manufacturers to develop a new film and camera system. Kodak will work with Canon, Fuji, Minolta and Nikon on advanced silver-halide photographic systems.

Kodak refuses to discuss the

ONLINE

video recorders now on sale are either analogue cassettes, which lose quality in the recording process, or digital but open-reel and therefore cumbersome.

While analogue cassettes are considered good enough for home recording, Toshiba says that broadcasters, video production houses and film studios prefer digital versions, which preserve the quality of the original video.

Eastern tech

MOTOROLA, the American electronics giant, is to build a £70 million factory in northern China to produce semiconductors and cellular phones. Motorola (China) will be a wholly owned subsidiary located on a 25-acre plot in the economic and technical development area of the port of Tianjin — a northern industrial city less than 100 miles from Beijing.

Officials said that most of the products would be exported, but the reality could be different. American firms investing in China are increasingly moving towards developing the Chinese market.

Video boost

A DIGITAL video recorder that will work with high definition television has been developed by Toshiba, which will offer it to film studios from next year. HDTV

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More PC power arrives

IBM backs 32-bit operating system

IBM has begun deliveries of the first 32-bit operating system for IBM-compatible personal computers. The OS/2 version 2 is a major revamping of its predecessor, which was a 16-bit system.

The new system expands the power available for software developers and features an easier-to-use graphical user interface and the ability to run programs written for the 16-bit DOS operating system, including those made to run as part of the popular Windows 3 package.

Windows 3 provided a graphical environment for IBM compatibles, allowing users to start and close programs and manage computer files by manipulating on-screen icons with a "mouse" instead of typing commands.

As computers and programs became more sophisticated and random access memory expanded, it appeared for a time that DOS's memory management limitations would make the system obsolete.

IBM and Microsoft had been working together on a successor, OS/2, when Microsoft came up with Windows 3, which has considerably extended the life of the DOS system and stalled the production of OS/2-based software.

But IBM has continued development of OS/2, transforming it into a system like that used on Apple's Macintosh PCs and adding the graphical interface called Workplace.

Much like the Macintosh desktop, Workplace allows users to control all aspects of their computer environment, determining how the display looks and where various program icons will be located. The new system will run in 4 megabytes of RAM but designers recommend at least 6 to 8 megabytes. It is expected to cost about £180.

IBM says more than 1,000 software companies, including Lotus, Borland, Word Perfect and Novell, are developing 32-bit applications for delivery this year.

PC MAGAZINE

24-bit video boards take the 16% wait out of Windows

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Strands Of Gold has late chance to atone

BY RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

Luck turns full circle for Kings Fountain

race last year, is a sound jumper who comes into his own around the National course. The 33-1 shot made most of the running and, although Captain Mor looked a danger on the run-in, he held on by a fast-

The victory ended a winnerless run stretching back 25 days for Richards and will encourage supporters of Twin Oaks, top-weight in tomorrow's Martell Grand

National.
Backers of Stay On Tracks, trained by Arthur Stephenson, also have reason to be optimistic following not only the bold showing by Captain Mor, but also Gale Again, who finished second to Cyphrate in an incident-

Only five of the 11 starters completed the race and Far Over Struy, one of four fallers, was killed when he broke his back.

spotted a long way out as Peter Scudamore and Cyphrare avoided the trouble and cruised through to take the lead two fences from home.

Carobee earns accolades with impressive victory

The bookmakers were less impressed by the style of Salwan's victory over Staunch Friend in the Glenlivet Anniversary Hurdle and Hills offered 50-1 for the

Last time out Salwan had come home strongly to finish fifth behind Duke Of Monmouth in the Daily Express

Triumph Hurdle. "We thought he was a good horse since he won at Wolverhampton," said the trainer. "But he didn't get the run of the race at Cheltenham. That's why Robert Stronge made more

In the 100 Pipers Handicap Hurdle, Martin Brennan drove Threeoutoffour clear racing to the final flight, but the seven-year-old had to battle his hardest to resist the late attacks of Castle Secret

ER NOVICES SELLING
2m 3f) (16)
13 J Bosley 5-11-2 M Bosley
30 (B) Miss L. Bower 6-11-2 H Jenkins
DELIGHT 15 (B.C.S.) M Pice 4-11-2

MOON 15 W G Turner 5-11-2 J Lower
E 15 William Price 5-11-2 M A Fitzgerald (3) D Meredith (7)
T 25 R Hodges 5-11-2 W Irvine
VICH 78 (B) D Jamy 5-11-2 J Neaves (7)
E 15 D R Tucker 5-11-2 R Armit
PET 50 (B) Mire J Wornacott 8-11-2 S Donohoe (5)
F 23 (V) C Broad 6-10-11 T Fuller (7)
NORA 8 R Frost 5-10-11 J Frost

17 (S) D Wintle 4-10-11... Mr M Rimmel (?)
 M Channon 4-10-9... Mr R Davis (?)
 EE 86 (B) D Wintle 4-10-4... Lorna Vincent
 W Merston (?)
 INMORE 20 (B) H Willis 4-10-4... —
 5-1 Vado Via, 6-1 Shellish's Pet, 8-1
 10-1 Lady Glenmore, 14-1 others

AD EDGE CHALLENGE
 NAP CHASE (£2,687: 2m 1f) (10)
 VER 13 (G,S) Mrs J Rutter 8-12-0
 M A Fitzgerald (S)
 Y 10 (G,S) A J Wilson 12-10-10 M Bosley
 R 20 (G,S) P Hobbs 8-10-8 B Caffaro (S)
 WONDER 18 (G) C Popham 10-10-7
 Marn Jones
 AND 169 (CD,F) A Dunn 6-10-5 J Frost
 B 27 (G) D Barona 7-10-5 R Greene (S)
 ANTERV 308 (CD,F) G P. P. 4-10-2

1 (F,G,S) Mrs H Parrotti 11-10-0 D Leahy (7)
 ADDY 93 (H,F) C Nash 10-10-0
 V Donoghue (7)
 OUTH LAD 43 N Mitchell 8-10-0
 Trevislor 7-2 Sabal: River, 8-1 Green
 ADDY 14-1 Father Paddy, 16-1 others

W DEER HANDICAP HURDLE

YIM 15 (CD,G.S.) G Balding 7-11-10 J Frost
ER 23 (G) B Milman 5-11-15 W McFarland
(F.S) Mrs J Wornacott 6-10-13
Mr M Hourigan (7)
(G,F) Mrs J Retter 7-10-8
M A Fitzgerald (7)
PRINCE 15 (CD,G.S.) C Mitchell 9-10-7
D Bridgwater (3)
IT 15 (CD,F.S) P Hobbs 8-10-4

DER 27 (B.S) N Mitchell 11-10-2
 D Skyrms
 LIL 20 (S) R Baker 5-10-2 ... S Burrough
 RESTING 78 (F.S) G Jones 7-10-0
 E Tierney (5)
 S CONE 119 (G.S) R Dyckun 9-10-0
 D Meredith (7)
 TABLE 8 (F.G) W Williams 9-10-0
 / Shoemark
 35 (S) M... W... 6-10-0

CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS
NOVICES HURDLE (Div II):

RGE 53 Mrs J Wonnacott 6-11-2
 ME HORN 29 A Tumell 5-11-2. S Donohoe
 RGE 129 D Baraga 5-11-2. D Forti (5)
 RT 17 S Pike 5-11-2. A Skelton (5)
 KER 16 O O'Neil 5-11-2. M A Fitzgerald
 17 Hallett 5-11-2. V Slattery
 OMAN 58 R Dickin 8-11-2. S Hazell (5)
 BER 14 W McKenzie-Coles 7-11-2. D Meredith

A 15 D Barons 6-11-2. B Clifford
20 P Jones 7-11-2. R Greene
SE 9 N Gazelee 8-10-11 E O'Donovan (3)
GRAPHICS 17 (BF) M Pipe 4-10-5 M Foster
2 Trum Robber, 9-2 Tiegurtha, 6-1 Jump
Applied Graphics, 12-1 others

BOOKED RIDES at Naas on
O'Brien supplies all four
whom is Vanton.

429 JPP/JF STRANDS OF GOLD 30 (6.5) (Independent Twins) Ld M Pape 13-12-0 S R Monnier . 80
430 SSS/PP KRYSTLE SAINT 30 (5) (D Whalley) M Arthurs 11-11-0 S R Andrews
BETTING: 6-4 Rushing Wind, 8-1 Pastoral Pride, 10-1 No Escort, Strands Of Gold, 12-1 Raise An Argument,
14-1 Lister Lad, Birtres, Harley, 20-1 Pasty Hayton, Polygonum, 25-1 Colind, Rectory Boy, Risk A Bet, 33-1
Others.

1991: DOUBLE TURN 10-12-0 Mr P Harding-Jones (100-1) J Jenkins 27 ran

Bloodstock agent David Minton, who completed the transaction, said: "The Thompsons owned Classified and could run there after Saturday."

The Thompsons own a number of horses, both on the flat and over jumps, the best of which is Gran Alba.

□ Adrian Maguire flies to Ireland for four booked rides Sunday. Michael O'Brien's mounts, best of whom is Var-

and tomorrow
at Naas on
lies all four
1.

CRICKET

South Africa will arouse passions in the Caribbean

FROM RICHARD STREETON
IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA

SOUTH Africa continue a rapid and momentous return to the world cricket stage tomorrow when their team arrives here for a historic first tour to West Indies. A visit only dreamed about for years by cricket lovers, and which politicians never envisaged could happen, finally becomes a reality.

Already the South Africans have generated more drama and spectacle off and on the field during one-day matches in India and the World Cup in Australasia than most players experience in a lifetime. Now in the Caribbean, they play three more one-day internationals, followed by South Africa's first Test match for 22 years, in an area where apartheid was more vehemently opposed than anywhere else on the world's cricket circuit.

Inevitably, the forthcoming fixtures will take place against a highly charged background. It was less than a fortnight ago that the West Indian prime ministers finally agreed that South Africa could come, though they continue to support trade sanctions. The approval by the various governments for the cricket tour followed President De Klerk's success in his referendum on whether apartheid should continue to be dismantled.

The West Indian cricket and other authorities are con-

TOUR DETAILS

SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY: K C Wessels (captain), T. Bosch, W. J. Cronje, A. A. Donald, O. Henry, A. C. Hudson, P. N. Kirsten, P. Kujala, M. W. Pridmore, J. N. Rhodes, D. J. Richardson, M. W. Rutherford, R. P. Smith, C. J. P. G. van Zyl

ITINERARY: Apr 7: one-day international (Kingston, Jamaica); Apr 11: one-day international (Port of Spain, Trinidad); Apr 12: one-day international (Port of Spain, Trinidad); Apr 18 to 22: Test match (Bridgetown, Barbados).

fident that there will be no demonstrations or protests but, frankly, nobody can be certain. Security will be strict wherever the South Africans go. So far, the occasional letter in the press suggesting the tour is premature and should be boycotted is the only tangible sign of opposition. West Indian grounds are already ringed by fencing to prevent exuberant spectators from running onto the field. Serious disturbances at the matches seem unlikely.

It remains to be seen how large the crowds are for the South African games. The Caribbean is suffering badly from a recession. In an unsophisticated local press the tour has also hardly been featured. Certainly, the visitor gets the impression that the rest of the world, which will watch the matches on satellite television, is anticipating the visit more eagerly than the locals.

West Indians are still arguing about their side's disappointing performance in the World Cup. The selectors

continue to be castigated for omitting players like Richards, Greenidge and Dujon. Marshall has fanned these flames by complaining in print about his treatment with the side in Australasia, which, he said, hastened his decision to retire after the tournament.

Once the South Africans arrive, though, the inherent love of cricket in the West Indies could well assert itself. Clearly, the matches would have been enhanced by the presence of the discarded West Indian players, and also that of Jimmy Cook, the South Africa opening batsman, whose exclusion continues to bewilder the more informed Caribbean enthusiasts.

Kepler Wessels, the South Africa captain, toured the West Indies as an Australian player in 1983-4 and knows the arduous pressure to which his players will be subjected by endless fast bowling on poor pitches. In Allan Donald, South Africa have probably the fastest bowler on either side. How he responds to carrying his attack single-handed is one of several fascinating imponderables that will be discussed in the coming weeks.

Clifford Smith, South Africa's captain, has confirmed that they have invited Pakistan and West Indies to play in a triangular one-day tournament next February. West Indies have already accepted their invitation. (AFP)

Mokibe takes the high road

FROM DAVID MILLER
IN JOHANNESBURG

Abel Mokibe begins his daily preparation for the Olympic marathon in Barcelona at four in the morning in the Tembisa township near here. It is the start of an 18-hour day.

As yet totally innocent of the commercial world, he has no comprehension of what awaits him should he win: which he might. He could suddenly become, if exposure does not crush him, the highest paid sportsman in South Africa. If the non-white face of South Africa is to emerge with distinction for the first time at an Olympic Games, revealing a new nation to the world, then this shy bushman, who talks almost in a whisper, could be the man to do it in the blue riband event. Like other long-distance Africans before him from high altitude, his anonymity could be his ally.

Last weekend, Mokibe, a mere 5ft 5in in his vivid orange sponsored shoes, won the national marathon championship at Cape Town in 2hr 14min 07sec, three minutes inside the qualifying time in only his third attempt at the distance.

Aged 26, he has improved dramatically each time since he ran 2hr 20min at 5,000ft in Transvaal two years ago. It was up and downhill all the way, more like a point-to-point, one of his friends recalls.

Saturday's victory earned him a modest £3,000, enough to help with the year's groceries and travel from the township. Had he broken the world record, it could have been £10,000. "He hardly knows about money, he just runs for the love of it," Francisco Andre, his Portuguese coach, says. Andre came from post-revolution Portugal 11 years ago for a better wage as an electrical designer, expecting to stay two years, and never went back. He trains Mokibe and several other prominent runners for no more than the thrill and the satisfaction.

For 20 years, Mokibe was just one among a million township footballers, utilising his speed. "I played in the lowest division with Eastern Brothers," he said. "I played No. 11, on the wing, but then the coach wanted me at No. 3, so I



Man from the bush: Mokibe carries South Africa's Olympic marathon hopes

became an attacking left back."

He has been training with Andre for four years, ever since he came second in a 32-kilometre road race. They have a close, sympathetic relationship that suits Mokibe's self-effacing nature, both of them working at Scaw Metals at Germiston, a suburb town of the big city. Mokibe takes his electrical apprenticeship exams in a month's time.

Andre set about strengthening Mokibe's diminutive frame, giving him gym work for the first time, to develop his calf muscles and produce greater drive, especially on the hills where Mokibe is naturally talented. "Barcelona's a tough course, especially with that long uphill finish, and that's where Abel can show to advantage," Andre says. "When he began with me,

his legs were no thicker than my arms."

Mokibe, whose father came from Botswana, rises at four, does an hour's road running, and arrives by six at work, where he can do circuit training in the sports club gymnasium before starting work at seven. Finishing at 4.30, he runs again, arriving back at Tembisa by eight, then to study for his exams.

Andre says of Mokibe: "His life at present is being an electrician. I know that he could win in Barcelona, but I don't want to put pressure on him. We can't tell how the environment of the Games will affect him, the crowds, the strangeness. Here, he deliberately leads a quiet, exclusive existence."

Andre will maintain the low profile for his runner, with no important races over the next few months.

some out-of-town events, following his own strategy, maybe one or two cross-country races in the winter season just beginning.

If South Africa had been unified in time, Mokibe would have been in the team for the recent world championships in Boston, having finished sixth in last year's national championship.

"It was wet and muddy," Andre recalls. "After two kilometres, Abel was lying on his back, and I had to shout at him to get him moving." Mokibe's uphill strength carried him through the field.

Psychologically, his genial coach's presence in Barcelona will be critical, and it is encouraging to know that Scaw Metals may decide to sponsor Andre's fare to the Games, for the making of what could be the sports story of 1992.

Closure threat to Olympics centre

BY JOHN GOODBODY

THE British Olympic Medical Centre at Harrow, the most advanced and comprehensive in the country, is threatened with closure after the Barcelona Games. In a controversial move that will split national governing bodies and sports medicine authorities, the British Olympic Association (BOA) may support a network of smaller centres rather than its own at Northwick Park.

The 14-strong staff have already been warned that the centre could close at the end of 1992, five years after it was opened by the Princess Royal, the president of the BOA, who said then that "it had been a long time coming".

A final decision on the centre, which has been extensively used by competitors preparing for the Olympics, will follow a meeting with the Sports Council later this month. The council is greatly increasing its contribution of taxpayers' money to sports medicine.

A spokeswoman for the BOA said: "There is no good duplicating services and we feel we should be combining forces. The important thing is how best to provide the service to the Olympic competitors. We feel a network of centres throughout the country, some perhaps at the national sports centres, could be the best way forward."

"Northwick Park could well be one of these places. Many sports want physiological testing near to where they train and not all together at one London hospital."

The BOA agreed in 1987 that the centre should be part of a hospital which could provide supplementary services and speed referrals. In 1989 only 163 competitors were seen but this rose to 309 in 1990 and 556-Jael-year. There has also been invaluable research work.

Brian Armstrong, director of international rowing, said: "If the centre closes it will be an immense gap in our ability to monitor our athletes' progress physiologically." Major Terry Bunyard, president of the British Modern Pentathlon Association, said: "We have benefited enormously from the centre's services. Most of the Olympic squad are based in the south. We would not like to see any diminution in the services. I would like to have the issue discussed by the National Olympic Committee."

TENNIS

New role found for Noah

Paris: Two days after resigning as Davis Cup captain, Yannick Noah was given a new job yesterday as consultant to a masterplan aimed at propelling France to the forefront of world tennis.

François Jauffret, national technical director of the French Tennis Federation, told a news conference that Noah had accepted a central role in the scheme to produce an elite squad of champions. He said the French federation would launch the scheme next week with an initial group of six or seven players supported by three coaches, two physical trainers and permanent medical backing.

Noah resigned after France, the holders, made an unexpected exit to unseeded Switzerland in the quarter-finals of the Davis Cup last weekend. He said he wanted to concentrate on a music career.

Jauffret said all leading French players had been invited to join the new scheme under which between ten and 12 players would eventually travel the world as "Team France", with professional help always available. Lille: Chris Bailey, of Britain, reached the quarter-finals of the French Satellite Masters in Lille by beating Clinton Ferreira, of South Africa, 6-3, 6-2. (Agencies)

ROWING

Firm hand guides start rehearsals

BY MIKE ROSEWELL, ROWING CORRESPONDENT

ROGER Stephens, the umpire for tomorrow's 138th University Boat Race, showed himself to be firm and fair in the start rehearsals yesterday. Efficient organisation of the start is vital, not only for the crews but for hundreds of media outlets which will be organising their rotas around 2.35pm tomorrow.

The only disruption that occurred yesterday was when Isis, the Oxford reserves, unexpectedly arrived on the empty stake boat next to Cambridge, drawing from Stephens: "Absolutely no way. Let Cambridge have their half-hour practice. Please paddle down-stream." Isis obeyed, presumably not imagining that such an obvious form guide would be permitted.

Cambridge undertook starts of 30 strokes and 40 strokes. In the first, when the rate range was 43 to 38, they suffered something of a hiatus in the last ten strokes, but in the second, when they ranged ten in the first quarter minute and 38 in the full minute, the boat was running much better.

Observers looked forward to a direct comparison of speed with Oxford, but the Dark Blues did a long warm-up and the following tide became more pronounced. A

veteran "Old Blues" crew helped to simulate Boat Race tension by becoming disconnected from their stake boat before the first effort. When started, Oxford did 25 strokes and managed 10s and 20s strokes respectively in the quarter and half-minute. The second row, of 30 strokes, saw the rate range from 43 to 38. Both starts looked lively, but Oxford failed to clear the rather "old" Old Blues in either piece.

Chris Drury, the Cambridge Tideway adviser, had little doubt that his proteges were moving the faster. Steve Royle, the Oxford coach, contented himself with: "We do not expect to lead them at the start."

Stephens is not a qualified umpire but he successfully took charge of the Isis and Goldie reserve race in 1985 and 1987 and has umpired other private matches on the Tideway. He will start the race by saying: "Attention. Set. Go.", the norm in domestic competition but not used in the Boat Race until 1991. With a new personal touch, he will, if any second warning is necessary, call out the stroke man's christian name rather than the crew name.

TODAY'S OUTINGS: Oxford: 8.30am and 12 noon. Cambridge: 9am and 12 noon. BOAT RACE: Tomorrow: 2.35pm.

EQUESTRIANISM

Master Craftsman due some luck

BY JENNY MACARTHUR

VIRGINIA Leng, who hopes to be selected for her third successive Olympic Games this summer, heads the record entry of 163 in the advanced class of the King's Somborne Horse Trials in Hampshire on Sunday.

With Badminton, the main Olympic trial, less than five weeks away, King's Somborne, sponsored by Pedigree Chum, has attracted most of the leading contenders for that event. Sixteen nations will be competing.

Other top British riders include Mary Thomson and Karen Dixon (nee Straker), members of the gold medal-winning team at the 1991 European championships, and Rodney Powell, the winner of Badminton last year. Blyth Tait, New Zealand's world champion, heads the foreign entry. Leng, a former world and European champion, is riding her two Badminton entries, Master Craftsman, aged 12, and Welton Houdini, aged nine. The horses, both owned by Citibank, finished ninth and seventh at Poplar Park in Suffolk last month. They have not competed since — and may do only the show jumping and dressage on Sunday.

Master Craftsman's recent history has made Leng cautious about the run-up to Badminton. It was at King's Somborne two years ago that "Crafty", the winner of an Olympic bronze medal in 1988 and Badminton and the European championships in 1989, twisted his pastern coming out of the water. He was withdrawn from Bad-

minton and also missed the 1990 world championships.

Last year a mystery knock to his near-forgotten on the eve of Badminton forced Leng to withdraw him for the second successive year. With two more events — Belton and Brigstock — scheduled for later this month, Leng will decide tomorrow whether to run them across country on Sunday.

Mary Thomson, also hoping for Olympic selection, has no such inhibitions with her two entries, King William and King Boris.

McIlvanney receives sports prize

HUGH McIlvanney, of *The Observer*, was named yesterday as the British sports journalist of the year in the awards organised by the Sports Council and the Sports Writers' Association and sponsored by Minet, the international insurance brokers.

OTHER PRINCIPAL AWARD WINNERS: Sports feature writer: Ian Woodcock (Daily Mail); Sports reporter: Malcolm Colley (Daily Express); Olympic sports writer: Alan Hubbard (The Observer); King Gardner memorial award: David Hunt (Inverclyde); Regional: Keith Newbery (The News, Portsmouth); Weekly: Richard Upwell (Oxford Mail); Magazine: Bill Elliott (Today's Gallery); Design: Daily Mirror.

HOCKEY

Bloor decides final

BY SYDNEY FRISKIN

UAU recovered the British Universities Sports Federation title after three years at Birmingham yesterday with a hard-won 1-0 victory over Northern Ireland in the final. Defences were so tightly controlled that freedom of movement was restricted up front. Yet Bloor and Land found sufficient room to trouble the Irish defence.

UAU's assertiveness was rewarded eight minutes into the second half by the only goal of the game. Land cut in sharply from the right and, cloaking his intentions skilfully, set up a chance for Bloor to score.

A renewal of endeavour by

the Irish kept the UAU defence busy but it held out. In the closing minutes UAU launched a spirited counter-attack from which they nearly scored but McMurray, the Irish goalkeeper, saved from Land at the expense of a long corner.

UAU: S. Mason; D. Cross (capt); D. Bettle; D. Phillips; D. Mear; M. Sutton; G. Kneib; P. Martin; C. Bloor; G. Jones; N. Land. NORTHERN IRELAND: A. McKelvey; G. Stuart; K. Dunlop; M. Wainwright; J. Rose (capt); S. Bloomer; C. Anderson (capt; S. Magill); D. Stewart; G. Reid; G. Cane; P. Mitchell. Umpires: G. Nash (Northern Counties) and D. Collier (Southern Counties).

OTHER RESULTS: Seventh place: Wales 4, Scotland 2. Fifth place: Cambridge 4, UAU 1. Third place: London 3, Oxford 2. Women: Final placings: 1, Scotland; 2, England A; 3, Loughborough; 4, England B; 5, Wales; 6, Northern Ireland; 7.

SQUASH RACKETS

Tough task awaits Jansher

BY COLIN MCQUILLAN

ON RECENT tournament performance, both top seeds ought to dominate the Hi-Tec British Open championships that start tomorrow with qualifying rounds at Lamb's Club in the City of London and culminate with finals on the Perspex court at Wembley on April 13. But the game's premier tournament is often more about strength, nerve and timing than pure form.

Jansher Khan, of Pakistan, is unbeaten this year and for the first time since he lost the 1987 final approaches a British Open free from the overwhelming presence of his elder compatriot, Jahangir Khan, the record ten-times title-holder who is absent this year with back problems.

Susan Devoy, the New Zealand, unexpectedly unseated in last year's quarter-finals by Sue Wright, the British national champion, and replaced as title-holder for the first time since 1984 by Lisa Opie, has won every significant women's tournament on the European circuit since her comeback four months ago after a miscarriage.

Jansher's lot appears the more demanding. The British Open is the last leading title eluding the stick thin but steel hard player, aged 22, from Peshawar. "I am always unlucky in that tournament," he said.

To reach his peak in the same decade dominated by his compatriot, aged 28, is probably his greatest misfortune, a lesser one being that his progress towards this year's final is likely to be hotly disputed.

Among those standing in his way are Chris Walker, the European champion who reached his first world tour semi-final in Madrid last month, Peter Marshall, the increasingly feared double-handed British national champion, and Rodney Martin, the Australian whose foot tendon injuries may be sufficiently recovered to allow a repeat of the victory that dispossessed the Pakistani of his world Open title last August.

If Martin advances to the final, he may find his fellow Australian, the second-seeded Chris Dittmar, thirsting to avenge his world title defeat in Adelaide, where Dittmar

was the strongest of home town favourites.

Dittmar has his own problems on the way to the final, however. Still carrying some shin problems, his quarter includes Simon Parke, aged 19, the junior world champion, from Yorkshire, who thrashed Jansher in December's Dutch Open and has beaten other physically troubled Australians in this tournament.

Devoy's worst nightmares may be caused by the younger English players. Opie is back on court after a disruptive

combination of physical and psychological troubles but, after a pale performance in Guernsey last month, a successful defence by the fifth-seeded champion, aged 28, would be extraordinary.

Her lifelong Guernsey rival, Martine Le Moignan, has been Devoy's closest attendant in recent competition, although the world champion may be more concerned about another likely quarter-final tussle with Wright, followed by a probable semi-final against either Michelle Martin, the Australian who almost toppled her in Guernsey, or Cassandra Jackman, the junior world champion from Norfolk whom even Devoy regards as a natural successor.



Marshall feared rival

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)	Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather (Sun)	Temp (°C)	Last snow fall
AUSTRIA						
Alpbach	20 230	good	open	sunny	3	1/4
		(Excellent skiing on upper pistes. Lower than)				
Ischgl	60 250	good	open	sunny	-5	1/4
		(Good conditions with all lifts/runs open)				
Oberurgl	180 250	good	open	cloudy	-1	1/4
		(Good snow depth with good skiing conditions)				
Soll	20 110	good	open	cloudy	2	1/4
		(Still good skiing at most levels)				
St Anton	60 300	good	open	sunny	0	1/4
		(Excellent conditions throughout)				
FRANCE						
Alpe d'Huez	110 170	good	open	overcast	-2	1/4
		(Upper pistes and glacier in good condition)				
Chamonix	30 360	good	open	overcast	-2	31/3
		(Good skiing on glacier/upper runs. Skiing down to 1,000m)				
Chaval	25 150	mixed	open	overcast	-3	1/4
		(Good compact snow at most levels. Large particularly good)				
Val d'Isère	115 225	good	open	overcast	-3	1/4
		(Extensive skiing on and off piste)				
ITALY						
Bardonecchia	20 80	mixed	open	fine	-1	31/3
		(Best skiing on upper pistes)				
C d'Ampezzo	30 120	good	open	fine	2	31/3
		(Good skiing on fresh snow. 20/40 lifts operating)				
SWITZERLAND						
Crans Montana	20 180	good	open	sunny	-3	1/4
		(Recent snowfall has freshened pistes)				
Davos	130 300	good	open	sunny	-5	1/4
		(Excellent skiing on well-prepared pistes)				
St Moritz	120 150	good	open	sunny	-4	1/4
		(Plenty of fresh snow on all pistes)				
Verbier	30 300	good	open	sunny	-7	31/3
		(Good skiing right down to village level)				
UNITED STATES						
Breckenridge	155 170	good	open	fine	-8	28/3
		(Good spring skiing)				
Kilington	110 210	good	open	sunny	-5	31/3
		(Good skiing over 54 miles of piste)				

Supplied by Ski Holidays. L and U refer to lower and upper slopes

AUTOSPORT BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

Full details and qualifying times on Friday and Saturday, with warm-up and post race reports from Sunday's race at INTERLAGOS

0839-123-123

Cabra says football safe at Stamford Bridge

By MATTHEW BOND
AND DENNIS SIGBY

CHELSEA supporters were assured last night that there will continue to be football at Stamford Bridge, even though the club had yesterday been told by the Appeal Court that it had seven days to come up with £22.85 million to buy the ground.

"The one thing we are not going to do is evict Chelsea," Baron Phillips, the spokesman for John Duggan, the chairman of Cabra Estates, the owners of the ground, said. "The future of football at Stamford Bridge is secure."

If the £22.85 million — the price set by an independent valuer — is not paid by next Thursday, it would become a debt on Chelsea and Cabra would have to take action against the club, probably in the form of a winding-up order. A receiver or adminis-

trator would be appointed, but this would not affect the football, and there is, as yet, no suggestion of Chelsea not being able to take up their place in the new Premier League next season.

Chelsea have two home matches this season after next Thursday: against Queen's Park Rangers on April 18 and against Arsenal on April 25. The Cabra spokesman said that neither was in danger.

Chelsea recently took the unusual step of circularising to clubs in England and Scotland the names of players in their reserves, saying that some players on the fringe of the first team were available for transfer.

On transfer-deadline day last week, they sold Clive Allen to West Ham United for £275,000, only three months after signing him from Manchester City for

£250,000, and Kevin Wilson to North County for £225,000. Jason Cundy, their England under-21 central defender, joined Tottenham Hotspur on loan until the end of the season, when an £800,000 transfer will be completed.

Although Ian Porterfield, the Chelsea manager, has said that money will be available for new players, the Cundy deal has upset many supporters.

Andy Townsend, Chelsea's Republic of Ireland captain, has been linked with a transfer to several leading clubs, with a £3 million price tag, but Ken Bates, the Chelsea chairman, has said that the club was not interested in selling. He described a suggestion that Manchester United might pay £2.2 million for the player as "an insulting figure".

The Appeal Court decided



Bates: struggle goes on

yesterday to strike out Chelsea's counter-claim for damages against Cabra. Lord Justices Dillon, Leggatt and Nolan refused Chelsea leave to appeal to the House of Lords, but the club is still considering a direct appeal to the law lords, who could grant a stay for the appeal.

Chelsea lawyers had argued that the fall in the property market between 1988, when the club exercised an option to buy Stamford Bridge, and 1991, when Cabra acknowledged the validity of that option, had made financing the purchase of Stamford Bridge almost impossible.

Lord Justice Nolan said the consequences for the club were "dire". "It deserves sympathy like all others who have suffered from the fall in property prices," he said.

But the long-running struggle by Ken Bates, the Chelsea chairman, to keep the club at Stamford Bridge is far from over. Yesterday, he stepped up the pressure on Cabra's board of directors by buying a further 2.5 million shares in the property company, Vanbrugh, the British Virgin Islands company backed by Bates and others,

now has 29.6 per cent of Cabra and is the group's biggest shareholder.

Bates will use the Vanbrugh stake as the basis for an attempt to have John Duggan, the Cabra chairman, and Andrew MacKay, a Cabra director and MP for Berkshire East, voted off the Cabra board.

However, the extraordinary general meeting at which such a proposal would be considered would be some weeks after Chelsea's General Election-day deadline.

Despite the apparent acrimony between the two parties, professional advisers to both Chelsea and Cabra are believed to be working on a compromise deal that may yet secure Chelsea's future at Stamford Bridge. Yesterday, there were reports that Duggan had turned down a deal reportedly worth up to £19 million, although sources

close to the negotiations said such a figure looked on the high side.

Cabra's lead bank, the Royal Bank of Scotland, is also understood to be aware of the negotiations.

When Bates last week unveiled the Vanbrugh stake in Cabra, he spoke of working towards an "elegant solution" to the club's dispute with Cabra. That could involve Chelsea buying SB Property, the Cabra subsidiary that actually owns Stamford Bridge and Craven Cottage, Fulham's Thames-side ground.

Selling Stamford Bridge, either to Chelsea or to a third party, could generate a huge capital-gains tax bill for SB Property. Selling SB Property to Chelsea could produce the same returns for Cabra shareholders but at a lower cost to Chelsea.

FA Cup build-up, page 35

1977: former market garden site opened as athletics stadium by London Athletics Club.
1984: Meera family buys the ground and turns it into a football ground, hoping to attract Fulham from Craven Cottage.
1985: Chelsea FC formed to occupy ground and admitted to Football League.
1978: Chelsea reveals a blueprint for an all-seater 60,000 stadium, which was never completed. By 1978 Chelsea's debts had grown to £1.5 million.
1981: Stamford Bridge Property Company formed as holding company to take over from Chelsea FC.
1982: Ken Bates buys the club from the Meera family for £200,000. David Meera sells his share in SB Property to Marler Estates, making that firm the owner of the ground.
1985: Marler given planning permission to redevelop the site.
1987: Bates submits alternative scheme, incorporating football stadium, which is approved in 1990. Save The Bridge campaign launched by Chelsea.
1988: Bates announces Chelsea will exercise an option to buy the site after lease expires.
1989: Cabra Estates buys Marler for £2.87 million. Chelsea's lease expires.

Indian Test batsman confirms informal offer

Yorkshire ready to make move for Tendulkar

By PETER BALL

YORKSHIRE'S cricket sub-committee is poised to take a momentous decision when it meets at Headingley this morning. It is expected to confirm an approach to Sachin Tendulkar, the outstanding young Indian batsman, to become their first overseas player.

It emerged last week that Tendulkar had been suggested as a replacement for Craig McDermott, the Australian fast bowler who had been Yorkshire's first choice but who withdrew through injury last month. Initially reluctant, Tendulkar was contacted through his mentor, Sunil Gavaskar, who reportedly advised him to take the opportunity.

Last night Tendulkar's brother, Ajit, confirmed that the family had had a telephone offer but had not yet made a decision. If, as seems likely, the cricket committee does ratify the offer this morning, things are expected

to move quickly, with the club's secretary, Chris Hassall, flying to India.

Until last winter, Yorkshire had always resisted employing anyone born outside the county boundaries. Declining membership and financial pressure after a decade of failure on the field against overseas imports, convinced the new president, Sir Lawrence Byford, that the policy had to be changed. His persuasiveness and political acumen led to a change in the rules and Yorkshire signed McDermott.

His withdrawal left the county in something of a quandary. With a fast bowler the prime target, there were few desirable replacements available, although there may be suggestions this morning that the Antiguan Ken Benjamin should be considered, but Byford insisted that Yorkshire would sign only a world-class player.

Tendulkar is certainly that. At only 18, he has made a phenomenal impact on world cricket since his first-class debut three years ago. A right-hand batsman of maturity beyond his years, he is capable of destroying even the best bowling.

He scored two Test centuries during India's tour of Australia in the winter, and has been widely acclaimed as potentially one of the greatest of batsmen. Gavaskar has said that he is a better player than he himself was at the same age.

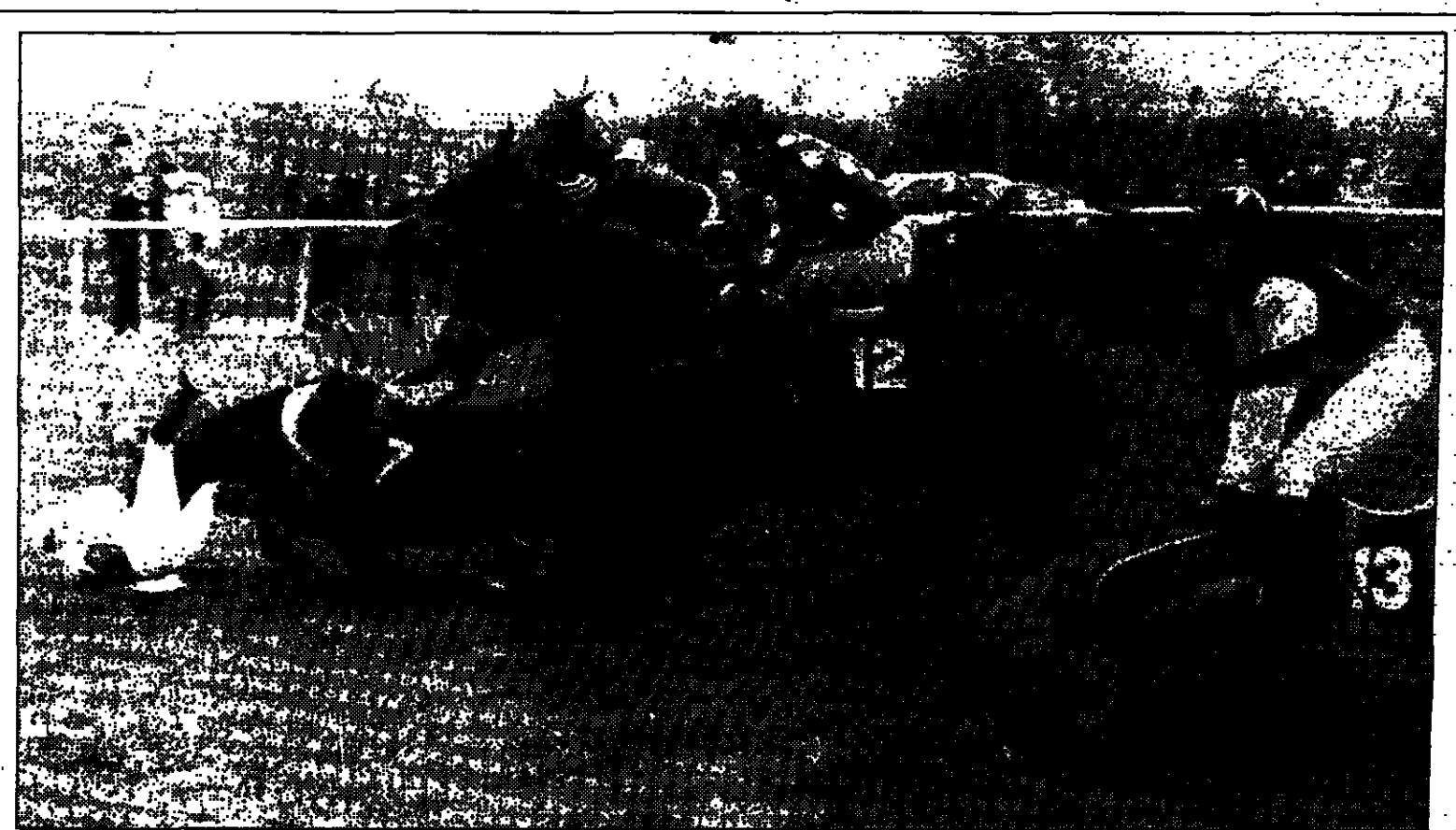
He has already achieved film-star status in India and his work as a model may delay his arrival in England until May. That however is unlikely to prove a barrier.

He may indeed prove a better bargain for Yorkshire than McDermott would have been, as he faced the prospect of missing the later stages of the season because of Australia's tour of Sri Lanka.

His batting could make the county a formidable force in one-day cricket, where his swing bowling may also be useful. In the short and even medium term, that will have a far greater effect on the county's finances than success in the county championship.

He will also undoubtedly have an important impact on the county's much-criticised race relations. It may not result in an influx of Yorkshire-born Asians into the team, but as a bridge between the club and the large Asian community, Tendulkar could play an important role. That too might help to boost attendances.

Significantly, the move to sign Tendulkar was begun at the suggestion of Solly Adani, a local Asian community leader and friend of Gavaskar.



No encore: J.J. Henry and Anthea Farrell, last year's winners, part company in the John Hughes Trophy at Liverpool yesterday

National plans in melting pot after fences take heavy toll

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

THREE jockeys ended in hospital and one horse died yesterday as the formidable Aintree fences exacted their toll on the opening day of the Grand National meeting.

Mark Perrett will be out of action for three weeks after breaking his collar-bone in a horrific fall on Trublion, while Jamie Osborne was badly shaken after Far Over Stray fell and died in the same race.

Osborne gave up his remaining rides and must pass the course doctor before resuming today. He is due to ride What's The Crack in tomorrow's Grand National.

Anthony Tordy underwent x-rays after aggravating an old neck injury when Shanagary fell in the John Hughes Memorial Trophy and may miss the rest of the meeting, while Graham Bradley went to hospital with a hand injury.

The casualties prompted changes in riding plans for tomorrow's Martell Grand National. With the ground faster than anticipated, Martin Pipe released Peter Scudamore from riding Bonanza Boy. The champion jockey is likely to

take over from Tony on Docklands Express, the third favourite, who will benefit from the drying conditions. Steve Smith Eccles replaces Scudamore on Bonanza Boy while Peter Niven takes over from Perrett on Rubika. Marcus Armytage could replace Bradley on Rowlandsons Jewels.

Scudamore last night confirmed the probable switch to Docklands Express. "I have been asked to ride Docklands Express if Anthony has to give up his rides for the rest of the meeting," he said.

Ironically, Bonanza Boy had been the subject of a sustained gamble prior to the jockey changes and was cut by most bookmakers to 20-1. Docklands Express was trimmed to 10-1 from 12-1 when Scudamore confirmed he was standing by to ride.

Earlier in the day, Lorcan Wyer was confirmed as the rider of Mar-

tin Pipe's second string, Omerta, winner of the Irish National last year but without a run this term.

Wyer, who will be having his second National ride, has already tasted big-race success on Omerta, winning the National Hunt Chase at Cheltenham in 1986 when the horse was trained by Homer Scott.

Other riding arrangements finalised were Michael Bowdley for Willsford, Ben de Haan for Team Challenge and Mark Richards for Pipe's third string, Hamworth.

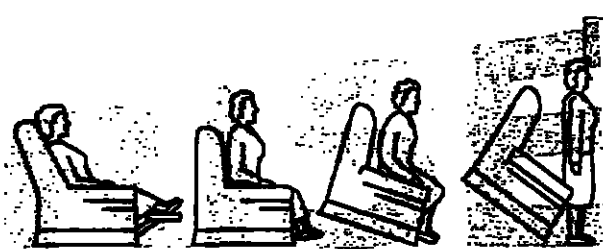
Heavy rainfall in many parts of the country persuaded punters to keep on backing Grand National runners who prefer soft ground. Unfortunately for them, the rain bypassed Aintree for the third successive day and all the jockeys riding yesterday reported the ground to be good or even fast.

Cool Ground confidence, page 32

The Times tomorrow features a full-colour map of the Grand National course plus the colours for all 40 runners and an A to Z guide to their chances



Farrell: Still in one piece



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Woosnam likes idea of being double Master

FROM MITCHELL PLATT'S
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN NEW ORLEANS

IAN Woosnam has enjoyed his year as the Master golfer but the fame has examined his patience since his win at Augusta National. "I've been verbally abused, even in Oswestry, where I live," he says. "I was in town the other week shopping with my wife, sister and brother-in-law and five well-dressed lads walked past."

"I actually thought how nice it was to see them all looking so smart but one turned round and abused me for no reason whatsoever. There is no need for that sort of thing. I know some people get jealous. But why? I mean, I've gone out, I've struggled and by making it I would like to think I've shown others what can be done."

Woosnam had five unproductive years behind him before his first win in 1982. In

the last ten years, he has become rich and famous. He has remained one of the lads at his local course as well as on the circuit, although he has wrestled with the responsibilities of being a role model.

"I like to be respected for what I do," he says. "I'm not a speaker, or anything like that, and I know my attitude sometimes in press-rooms is very poor. But it's just the way I am. I'm aggressive. I have to say my point. I hate being slagged for something I've done. I hate it."

"But I know it's like my Dad said to me: that I don't belong just to the family but to the public as well. Everybody wants a piece of me. It's learning to live with that. But I am just an ordinary person who comes from Oswestry, where most of the people are just great, who like a drink, who like a cigarette and who wants to stay that way. I just want to go out and play golf."



Woosnam: abused

"Yes, I've got a lot of money, a nice house, a nice car, an aeroplane, but the bottom line is I just want to enjoy myself like anyone else."

Woosnam admits that somewhere between winning the Masters last April and playing in the Ryder Cup in September, he did lose interest. He castigated the press, apportioning blame to them

for Europe's defeat, but he admits he was so dismayed by his own form, caused as he later discovered by his clubs being four swing-weights out, that he did not want to be at Kiawah Island.

"I was hitting the ball so inconsistently that I told Bernard [Gallacher] to let someone else have a go from the start," he says. "I told him I just wanted to play in the singles. The whole experience absolutely shattered me. I can take losing in the World Match Play Championship because that's an individual thing, but to lose in the Ryder Cup is to lose for everyone on the team. I get twice as nervous, twice as jumpy as I would in a major."

Woosnam, of course, remained composed on the 18th tee at Augusta with the Masters in his sights. "You're pumped-up, psyched-up and a lot more nervous because you know that you might not get this chance again," he

says. "But it wasn't as if I couldn't get the tee peg into the ground or anything like that. I'd got myself there and I had the self belief that I could do it. And self belief is more important than commitment or technique."

His drive veered to the left with such power that the ball carried the fairway bunkers, taking them out of play. Tom Watson, alongside him, hit his ball right into the trees.

"I doubt whether I'd get the chance to hit that shot again because last year the tee was slightly up, only four or five yards, but enough. The branches of the trees have got closer to the tee over the years and off the very back you would have to take a different line."

"I knew that Ollie [Jose Maria Olazábal] was in a bunker in two and, of course, that Tom was in the trees. My aim was to get to the green safely in two. The spectators were a distraction — they

wanted to see Watson playing out of the trees. But after getting a gap I hit an 8-iron a little heavy. It just about made the green, although the best thing was to be putting uphill."

Woosnam left himself a second putt of six feet and as the ball disappeared into the hole he went down on his right knee and fisted the air. "When you look back on the first five years of my career, then you have to be surprised by what I've done," he said. "But I suppose it wasn't such a surprise to win the Masters because of what I have managed in the last ten years."

"It is nice to go around the world being called the Master golfer. It would be nice to be called a double Masters champion by Sunday week."

New Orleans report, page 35

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MODERN TIMES

Ways of coping with the death of a partner

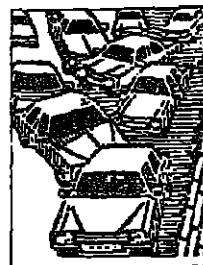


LIFE & TIMES

FRIDAY APRIL 3 1992

MOTORING

When your dream car turns out to be stolen



Political mischief maker

Sir Robin Day, the hectoring television interviewer and *Question Time* host, is back, enjoying life among the elder statesmen. He talks to Valerie Grove

Geriatric ward," wheezes the voice on the telephone. Sir Robin Day is just back from another edition of *The Elder Statesmen*, "the only election coverage worth watching", in the view of Craig Brown.

Every other day, at 8.35am, Sir Robin has a ten-minute banter with Lord Jenkins, Denis Healey and Norman Tebbit on BBC 1's *Breakfast Time*. It routs even the most terminal case of election fatigue to hear the impromptu bickering and bon mots of these demob-happy old warriors, variously referred to as the Old Devils or the Old Contemptibles.

"On this programme we can say anything we like," beams Lord Jenkins, launching into "all the cockups" of this government.

At first, they seemed full of bonhomie, mocking the hurly-burly around them. Then things got a bit vicious. Did someone mention "till the pips squeak"? "I didn't say anything of the sort," Mr Healey snorted: he would gladly pay £10 to anyone who could show where he said pips would squeak. (What he said was: "We shall increase income tax on the better off. I warn you, there will be howls of anguish from the rich.")

As days progressed, Mr Tebbit's vulpine smile has become wan. Meanwhile Mr Healey, the scent of victory in his nostrils, is ever more cavalier: "So you dragged Mrs Thatcher out of the Sunset Home to which you had ditched her..." One morning, when Healey chuckled, Tebbit snapped: "It's no good doing your silly giggle, Denis, will you just shut up?" Meanwhile Lord Jenkins's smile dimples on. Chris Patten, he said, was like a teetotaler who had suddenly taken to drink and it had gone to his head, while Norman was a man who had "grown up with drink, so to speak, so a cheerfully malevolent kick in the groin comes naturally to him."

The charm of their overview is not just their well-phrased reminiscences as former cabinet ministers (as *parti pris* as ever, though removed from the fray) but their ability to mock anyone riding too high a moral horse. Much honest sense is spoken. Sir Robin slings brisk questions. Would Mr Healey accept a seat in a Labour cabinet? "I know my answer but I'm damned if I'll tell you." Why are women tempted to vote for Paddy Ashdown? "Because women are essentially rational." (Healey adds: "It's because he looks like Steve McQueen.") "Norman, who will lead the party if there is a defeat on April 9?" "I have no idea. We will look at that when we see the election." Healey: "How interesting to hear Norman suggest that the leadership question will arise the moment the Tories lose."

You get the picture. It is ten minutes of pure mischief. Everybody tells Sir Robin they think it is all too short, and the BBC has suggested it might carry on after the election...

This is cheering because many still miss Sir Robin on *Question Time*, and he dearly regrets leaving it. "Yes. One makes mistakes in life and that was one of mine. But I was tired, and felt stale. I'd become a bit of a cliché. All I was saying was 'the attractive lady in the nice blouse' when I meant 'the hideous lady in the horrible blouse'. And I was writing my book and thought it would inhibit me in what I could say about the BBC, but that was foolish."

"And I genuinely did not realise how much the public liked it. That is not false modesty. I did not realise, and nor I think did the public, until it became something different. It's rather embarrassing, but I've never had so much praise heaped upon me as when I'd stopped working. People began to view my appearances through rose-tinted spectacles, retrospectively."

Sir Robin practically invented the television interview. Where there had been deference and forelock-tugging he brought bite and a hint of danger. Today's political interviewers are largely his legacies; and both interviewers and their subjects have got better and better at the game. He says he squirms when certain interviewers challenge their victims to "come off it, come clean" as if they were criminals; the Dimblebys, he has said, are "harmless and bland" but

this was meant genially: "They are professional and efficient. Whether they have 'danger' or 'thunder' is according to people's taste. But they are both young men of promise." Young Jonathan, he added, is doing *Election Call* (his old slot "disappointingly well").

Coming after the much-parodied Brian Walden interviews, with their terrifying 193-word challenges which turn the sessions into debates, Sir Robin's confrontations with each party leader for Thames TV's *This Week* have been models of conciseness.

To Mr Major: "What kind of Tory are you - Thatcherite fish or Heseltine fowl?" "Is it good enough to put ideas across in a nice, quiet, mild, reasonably spoken way?" "Why does the Conservative party deserve what the British people have never given any party in modern times, a fourth consecutive term of office?"

"Will that answer cut much ice with the unemployed, the bankrupt businessman who feels betrayed by the policies of this government?" "Why should people trust your economic judgement when they remember the colossal fiasco of the poll tax?" "They might say, any fool can get inflation under control as long as they're prepared to lay the economy on its back."

"Isn't it only fair for the other team to have an innings, in a healthy democracy?" (Major: "It isn't a game of tag.") "Wouldn't it be a good idea, now that things are getting rough, to reconsider your refusal to have a face-to-face with Mr Kinnock?" Last night it was Neil Kinnock's turn (while Mr Major was back on his soapbox, as Sir Robin had suggested).

It all began when Robin Day answered an inspired advert in 1955: "Independent Television News Ltd invites applications for the post of 'newscaster'. The work might appear to a barrister who is thinking of giving up the profession."

What luck Sir Robin had given up the law because he was broke and didn't think he'd get to the top. "They had tried dozens of journalists, broadcasters and actors: 'newscaster' was a new breed, they were not sure what they wanted. Then someone said what about the Bar? They're chaps who have to speak on their feet." What ITN lit upon was the need for cross-examining skills, not often given to the common journalist.

Yet it was not until the 1964 election that party leaders appeared on television answering questions read out from postcards sent in by the public. "But now the incisive, vigorous interview has become commonplace. Thirty years ago it was a novelty. Harold Macmillan was my first [in 1959], and it was so revolutionary it made banner headlines across the *Daily Express*. Now the prime minister is interviewed every other day, even in the street. So I may seem less fierce, less provocative."

"I don't ask impossible or difficult questions. A very tough question is not what people think. It is the answer that makes the question seem tough. I may think up a very difficult question, to which someone replies, 'Ah, Robin. I hoped you'd ask that', and people think the question was soft. Or I can say simply, 'Are you going to stand against so-and-so?' and the chap says, 'How dare you?' or, 'Who told you that?' and blow his top, and that then appears to be a tough."



National treasure: Sir Robin is much the same off air as on - how tie, cruel glasses, relishing every detail of political life, savouring political terminology

aggressive question."

Sir Robin is always himself: much the same off air as on. He wears the "cruel glasses" (Frankie Howard's description), relishing every detail of political life, savouring political terminology. "I've been trying to say *plaudistic democracy* in Roy's voice."

He was born in Hampstead Garden Suburb, the rather spoilt youngest child of middle-aged parents. He was named on his tenth birthday for being noisy and disorderly in morning assembly, and his parents sent him to boarding school when he became too obstreperous.

He is compulsively argumentative when questioned. "Your book of memoirs is rather impersonal." "Why is it impersonal?" "You don't dwell on personal matters. It's unemotional, then." "No, it is full of deep and passionate emotion." The fact remains that he is perfunctory about his marriage and divorce.

'I don't ask difficult questions. A tough question is not what people think. It is the answer that makes the question seem tough'

voice six lines. He waves at a pile of political biographies on his table. "None of them say more than when they met their wives... What do you expect me to write? An appendix about all the ladies I'd known before my marriage?"

The pain of being divorced is undisputed. He speaks enviously of all his married friends, whom he supposes are happy. His wife (Katherine Ainsley) was a law tutor, clever and beautiful. They separated in 1983, the year of Sir Robin's pinnacle of involvement in the election: he did 22 hours of live television, including *Panorama* interviews with the three leaders.

There had been years of anxiety after their elder son Alexander (born in February 1974 while Mr Day was on the air on *It's Your Line*) fractured his skull in a fall at London Zoo at the age of four. He is now at sixth form college, and recently stayed with his father "so I've been cooking for him and washing his smalls and making sure he gets up in the morning". The younger son is at boarding school. He dedicates his book to the two boys: "The world continues to offer glittering prizes to those who have stout hearts and sharp swords."

His wardrobe contains thin suits and fat suits as his weight fluctuates according to his many diets ("better than being dead") after his heart bypass and, having once been 17 stone, he keeps a weight-loss chart on his bathroom wall. What he calls his "attic in a backstreet in Victoria" is a comfortable bachelor flat in the division bell territory of Westminster, with walls of books and caricatures of himself and a gas log fire and Dixieland on the turntable. The tinkling piano in the next apartment is being played by Lady Carr, wife of Lord (Robert) Carr, on quiet evenings, chamber and orchestral concerts waft across from St John's, Smith Square.

His self-mocking glumness prevails, about being "in the departure lounge of life". But to the world he presents a sociable figure, lunching here, dining there, jocularly warning off gossip diarists who love to write stories about his companions: he says it's all nonsense, he could show me a sheaf of apologies from newspapers, but "if you are a sea-captain, the sea is where you live". "But you are attractive to women, Sir Robin." "That may be so. But I am also 68 years old. The same age as Earl Spencer" (whose funeral was held that day).

He claims to have another regret: not having got into Parliament when he stood for the Liberals in 1959. "Oh yes. Only I chose the wrong party..." But what about all

those tiresome constituents, who, as Matthew Parris says, occupy politicians' time and ought to be painted green? "If you're an MP, it's your job to help them."

"I would have liked to sit on those green benches, having as Robert Rhodes James said a ringside seat at history, enjoying the great moments of theatre." The June Mendoza portrait of the House of Commons (a print is on his wall) includes a distant Sir Robin, a lone bespectacled figure at the back of the gallery.

It puzzles me that someone who has been in a position to ask the most pertinent questions of famous men - "Do you regret dropping the atom bomb, Mr Truman?" "Lord Lambton, why should a man of your social position and charm and personality have to go to whores for sex?" - has any such regrets.

"Being in Parliament wouldn't have stopped me doing television. Look at Brian Walden, a brilliant member of parliament who became a brilliant TV interviewer. I thought that was a step down for him, but *chacun a son gout*."

Some talk of women who burst into tears at his rudeness, but I cannot understand it. He merely asks blunt questions. Prince Philip style. Ludovic Kennedy reports that he may ask dinner companions whether they prefer intercourse at night or in the morning, but anyone who takes fright at such questions should not go to grown-up dinners. My 15-year-old daughter met him recently at a party and, having no idea who the great inquisitor was, found him sweet and avuncular: he talked of his sons.

He has now been on screen for 37 years, yet when he first began, they thought he was "belligerent, harsh, unsympathetic, hectoring" and wanted to get rid of him. It was Aidan Crawley who insisted Day must stay or he would resign. Sir Robin still cannot decide whether this was out of faith in him, or testing out his own authority.

He says he is proudest of his campaign for televising Parliament, which began in 1963. At the same time he suggested a national lottery. And he is the unacknowledged inventor of the *Today* programme: in 1955 he suggested an early morning programme of news background stories. But they told him it could never happen: "Too much work," they said, "and all that early rising..."

Sir Robin will spend election night - his ninth as a broadcaster - in the ITN studio, frowning his

brow, enjoying every moment. He says he wishes he were like Osborne or Pinter, and could earn money (perhaps from writing a political thriller) without working any more, but it's not his style. His achievements are suited to him, and nobody has ever accused him of modesty. Which is as it should be. He is a national treasure, with a new lease on our affections.

INSIDE

Arts	2.3
Health	4
Modern times	5.6
Motoring	7
Law report	8
TV, radio	10

WEEKEND TIMES tomorrow
Has the Grand National gone soft?

KYRENIA AND BEYOND

AN 8 DAY SPRING VISIT TO THE CASTLES, ABBEYS AND ANCIENT SITES OF NORTH CYPRUS

With hand on heart, there are not many areas which we can truly describe as untouched. However, North Cyprus without doubt fits this description. Although there has been a little development of hotels over the past few years, the whole area still has that wonderful quality of peace and tranquillity that could be found on most Mediterranean islands 30 or 40 years ago.

This is all the more surprising when you consider how attractive the countryside is, how welcoming the people are and what a fascinating history can be found along the scenic coastline and in the mountainous countryside. Here the forts and castles which perch on top of the dramatically shaped hills are as numerous as the sites scattered throughout the country which testify to its complicated history, from the ancient Greeks to Romans, Byzantines, Genoese, Venetians, Arabs and Turks.

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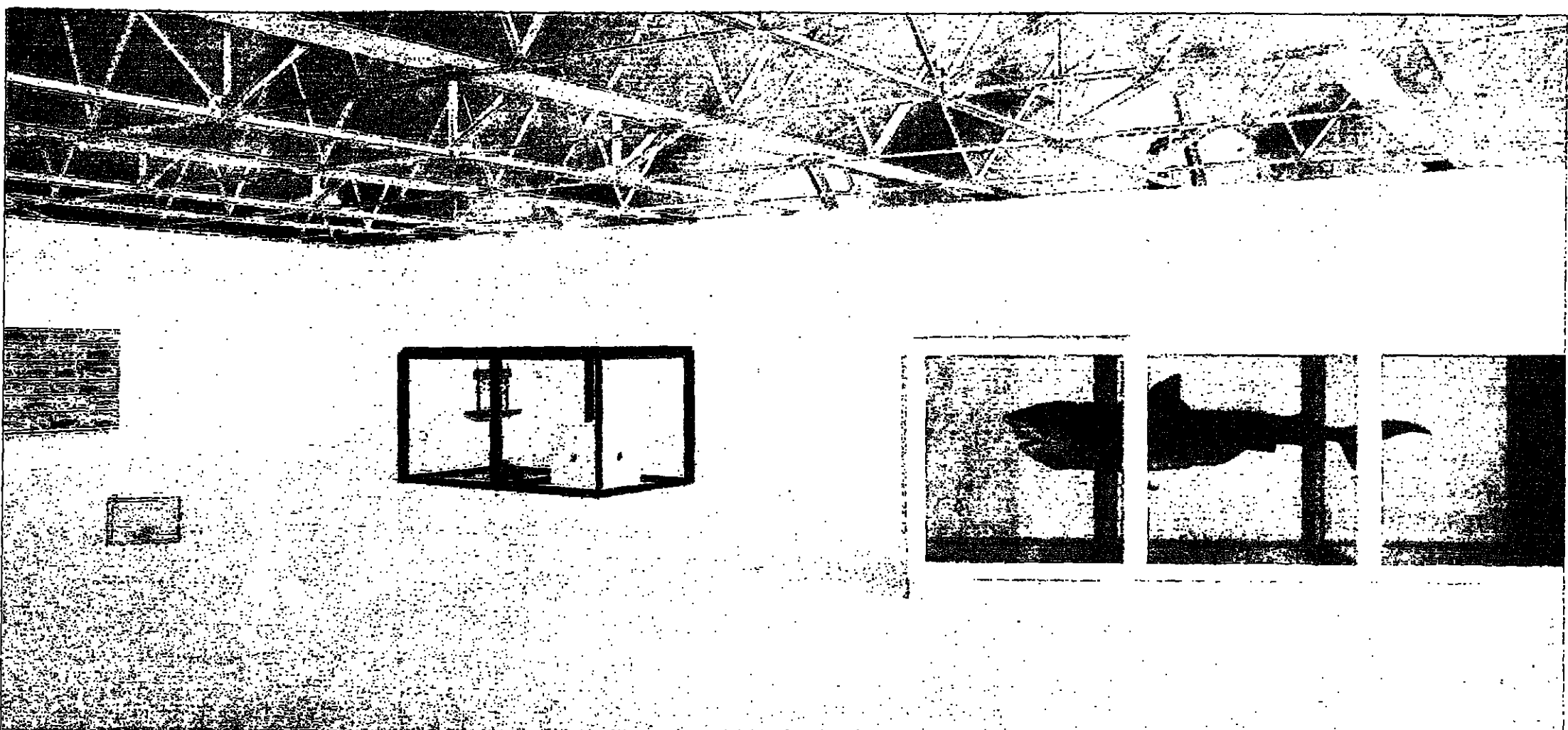
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**A daily guide to arts
and entertainment
compiled by Kari Knight**

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London Galleries: Young British Artists at the Saatchi Collection, reviewed by Richard Cork

Tanks for the memories



Immaculate order and clinical clarity: a view of the Saatchi Collection gallery, showing works by Damien Hirst, including (right) *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*

Viewed from the entrance of the Saatchi Collection's spartan gallery, Damien Hirst's large steel sculpture looks like a classic minimalist statement. But as you approach this stripped exercise in geometrical purity, the structure's apparent abstraction gives way to a disturbing alternative. For a black swivel chair sits next to a stark office table inside the box. And the only objects on the table's white top are an open packet of Silk Cut, a lighter, a cigarette and an ashtray plentifully supplied with butts.

Coolness and austerity are countered, quite unexpectedly, by psychodrama. Nothing distracts attention from the remorseless emphasis on smoking, and Hirst ensures that the container offers no hint of an exit.

Within the box, a glass sheet separates the main area from a narrow space beyond. The division, however, only accentuates the prison-like mood. The occupant of this see-through cell is condemned to a life-threatening addiction, and Hirst implies that the habit is irresistibly attractive by ending his work *The Acquired Inability to Escape*.

The fascination of this promising young artist's work lies in his

readiness to organise Kafkaesque nightmares with such clinical clarity. Although the glass structure finally comes to resemble a chamber of extinction, the immaculate order of the work prevents any Expressionist paranoia from breaking out. Everything is conveyed in a deadpan manner, allowing room for gallows humour alongside the intimations of mortality.

Even when he deals directly with death, Hirst remains as disciplined as before. Towards the middle of the largest Saatchi room, a tripartite tank rests on the floor. This time, the entire space is filled with green formaldehyde to preserve the 14-foot tiger shark suspended within the liquid. Although quite motionless, and therefore clearly dead, the creature retains an uncanny ability to disconcert.

Seen from the side, the shark's head appears to hover close to the glass. But when we move round to the front, it suddenly jumps towards the centre of the tank. The illusion of movement continues as we traverse the length of the shark, noticing abrupt shifts in position with each successive sheet of glass. And once the end is reached, the creature's body reduces into a green mist beyond the sharply focused tail.

Through the blurring action of the formaldehyde, motion is conjured again. It prevents us from acknowledging the full reality of the shark's lifeless state, and Hirst's typically intriguing title suggests that we are unable to do so anyway: *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*.

But that does not prevent him from trying to shock the viewer into confronting the unacceptable brevity of existence. Near the shark tank, a double glass cube contains the most disturbing of his exhibits. In one half, a neat white box provides a hatching-ground for thousands of maggots. When the bluebonnets fly out, though, they remain confined by the setting.

All they can do is settle on a repellent cow's head, lying in the other half of the container. Above this rotting memento mori hang the thin tubes of an insectorator, attached to a tray littered with dead flies. More have expired on the floor below, turning the sculpture into a charnel-house.

Mesmerised and nauseated in equal measure, we are forced to ask ourselves why the spectacle is so gruesome. After all, the death of a fly does not normally provoke sympathy in humans. Its life-span is brief,

and Hirst draws attention to that fact as arrestingly as he can. If we find his work cruel, should efforts be made to ban insectorators from places where they safeguard our health?

Hirst is the most uncomfortable of artists, and the fact that he presents his murky findings with calm, surgical exactitude only adds to the disquiet. Look at the pseudo-scientific precision with which he marshals 38 species of four-looking fish in a work called *Isolated Elements Swimming in the Same Direction For the Purpose of Understanding*. Arranged in transparent plastic cases on shelves, they look like laboratory specimens intended to prove some researcher's theory. But their purpose is to emphasise the unfathomable strangeness of life-in-death, as well as subverting the whole notion of finding solace in a bowl-full of goldfish.

Hirst is one of five "Young British Artists" sharing the Saatchi show. But most of his fellow-exhibitors fail to generate the amount of interest he sustains: Alex Landrum displays minimal paintings in pairs of contrasted eggshell colours. They seem abstract, but discreetly embedded in

each canvas is the name chosen by Dulux to promote this particular hue. Sometimes they are terse one brilliant blue picture is called *Yacht*, while its rich yellow neighbour carries the title *Goldcoast*. But the sales-pitch soon goes into poetic overdrive, saddling a sickly orange canvas with the name *Exquisite* and dubbing its partner *Extravagance*.

After a while, though, monotony sets in. A similar problem afflicts the paintings by John Greenwood. An ebullient latter-day Surrealist, he makes no attempt to hide his debts to Duchamp, Tanguy and Dalí.

Whirling forms, invariably bulbous and sometimes suggestive of ecoplasms, fill the large, meticulously defined images with frenzied movement. Sprays and eggs often appear to play their part in these extensible tableaux, alive with burgeoning incidents which also rely on cartoon sources. The performance is always polished, but the frantic activity and complication soon palls.

I turned with relief to the cooler, more analytical offerings by Langlands & Bell. Obsessed by buildings, they concentrate on the plan of a chosen edifice rather than its frontage. Architecture as power-structure is their theme, pursued in careful, lucid models culled from various

countries and historical periods. Despite their white-lacquered purity, these exacting reliefs are sinister, even chilling. Social engineering is the theme, openly expressed in a work called *Maisons de Force*, where seven chairs with models installed in their seats are lined up as if waiting to be occupied by a vindictive jury.

But the most powerful of the four artists showing alongside Hirst is Rachel Whiteread. Although her work became widely familiar in the Turner Prize short-list last year, her grandest sculpture made no appearance at the Tate. *Ghost*, a colossal apparition in white plaster, is the masterpiece of the exhibition. Cast in sections from the interior space of a cramped north London living-room, it has a melancholy air.

The imprints of a window, panned door and fireplace complete with sconemarks appear on successive sides of this glacial block. Thin gaps between the sections disclose the emptiness within, buttressed by a steel frame. Bleached, silent and uninhabited, *Ghost* finally becomes as elusive as a dream.

Young British Artists continues at the Saatchi Collection (071-624 8299), 98a Boundary Road, NW8, Friday and Saturday only, 12-6, until August.

GALLERIES: CRITIC'S CHOICE

● **REMBRANDT**: He is the one Old Master who has been news for the last decade owing largely to the activity of the Rembrandt Committee which has been demoting large numbers of once-revered Rembrandts into the work of pupils and followers. The show comes to London from Berlin and Amsterdam, and consists of 46 paintings accepted by the committee, plus 12 now ascribed to lesser men with background material to elucidate the criteria. A fascinating contribution to the debate.

National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, WC2 (071-837 3321). Daily, 10am-6pm (Wed, Fri, 9pm), to May 24.

● **DRAWINGS BY REMBRANDT AND HIS CIRCLE**: The Committee has to turn its attention fully to Rembrandt's drawings. But his catalogue and the show itself, Martin Royall's latest, has not hesitated to anticipate the BM's own extensive holding has been closely scrutinised, and a considerable number also demoted to far lower status. The show is not the same as the drawing show in Berlin and Amsterdam, but homemade, mostly from the 80-odd Rembrandt (or Rembrandt-connected) works in the Department of Prints and Drawings.

British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (071-633 1555). Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun, 2.30-6pm.

● **JOHN KEANE - GULF**: There are not so many war artists around today: the specialisation is left mostly to photographers. But John Keane has come to be connected with records and evocations of war, and so it was logical that he should be dispatched to cast a cool eye on the Gulf. Not in the event, so foot as that, for whatever his personal attitude to war may be, he is clearly not immune to the excitement of combat as well as the pity and terror.

Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 (071-416 5315). Daily, 10am-6pm, until May 31.

● **119TH WATERCOLOUR EXHIBITION**: Agnew's annual show of watercolours has been going strong since 1867. Like last year's, this year's show is smaller and more select than they used to be, which is not a bad thing. Highlights include the second Turner Ruskin ever bought, *Gosport: The Entrance to Portsmouth Harbour*, a major Cornish, important early Constable and late Palmer.

Agnew's, 43 Old Bond Street, London W1 (071-629 6176). Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5.30pm (Thurs 6.30pm), to April 10.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

Yes to an arts minister, but no to a paymaster

What are the imminent election's implications for the arts in Britain? Peter Jonas, general director of English National Opera, scans the major parties' pledges and manifestos

The arts are not an election issue but the election has become an issue for the arts. The Conservative manifesto promising a new arts ministry headed by a Cabinet minister was a surprise. Having stolen Labour's clothes, John Major has added costume jewellery. The shadow arts minister, Mark Fisher, defends the fact that his own post is not deemed worthy of Cabinet rank by advocating quality of policy rather than seniority of position.

The Tories also promise a full-scale review of the func-

tions of the Arts Council, while Labour promises to enforce statutory arts responsibilities on local authorities, but to leave the Arts Council alone. With the Liberals also promising an arts ministry, one thing is certain: the arts in Britain are due for the biggest shake-up since the Sixties.

Why have the major political parties adopted similar policies for a new ministry to whose responsibilities broadcasting is to be added? The answer is that the arts are moving up the political agenda in Europe. No modern

political party can now ignore the arts. The Maastricht treaty requires the European Commission to take account of the cultural dimension in all its decisions. If Britain does not have a serious arts ministry it will not be taken seriously in Europe. The present Office of Arts and Libraries is the equivalent, for civil servants, of the Chiltern Hundreds: not the natural career ambition for high-fliers.

There is, also, a convenient domestic reason for the change: perhaps the most crucial cultural event of the mid-Nineties will be the review of the BBC's charter. If the Conservatives win we can expect reams of discussion papers on the future of the BBC and the Arts Council.

The linkage is not fortuitous. The Government will be aware of the Peacock Committee's proposals in its report on the future of the BBC for an "Arts Council of the air": which will re-surface if these two organisations are put simultaneously on the political agenda.

A new arts ministry is likely to be welcomed by both the BBC and the Arts Council, provided that the independence of the arts can be preserved. And here's the rub: any new arts minister is likely to want important things to do. Unfortunately, all the



Peter Jonas: "arm's-length" funding should stay

glamorous parts of the arts lie with Lord Falumbo, the glamorous chairman of the Arts Council. If a new arts minister were to reduce the council's responsibilities and fund the national companies himself, the result would be uproar.

It cannot be in the long-term interests of companies such as the Royal National Theatre to be funded directly by the arts minister. He and his servants would be involved in discussions of the minutiae of artistic judgements and their financial consequences. Worse, the minister would be open to questions about decisions from MPs. "Arm's-length" funding, cherished principle of British arts support, would vanish.

This misguided notion seems to be the present Government's intention. But it is unlikely that John Major has yet woken up to the unwelcome political consequences. On this front Labour has been much shrewder: its new ministry would not interfere with the council's responsibilities for the national companies, although it would insist on a greater delegation of arts organisations to the regions.

There is an economic case for a new ministry: the arts contributed £6 billion to the British balance of payments in 1990, £2 billion more than the motor industry. Britain's "arts industries" employ 670,000 people: 2.8 per cent of the employed population.

There is much a new arts minister must do to argue for increased investment in the arts. But the minister should leave the Arts Council to get on with its job.

Let the council continue to play its critical role in formulating a national strategy for the arts, in supporting innovation and, above all, in being an effective advocate for the arts. The challenge for the new arts minister, whoever he or she may be, is to take on the arts, not take them over.

Screening out injustice?

Lord Chief Justice Lord Lane, soon to depart the bench, is not thought to admire the Press role in investigating miscarriages of justice. Journalists from BBC TV's *Rough Justice* caught the sharp end of his tongue in 1985. And when the Birmingham Six's penultimate appeal, helped by Granada's *World In Action*, was lost in 1988, Lord Lane ended the summing up with a firm rebuff for the campaigners by noting that the longer the appeal had continued, the safer the convictions had seemed.

It was ironic, then, that Lord Lane should last night play a walk-on part in the latest television investigation of suspected miscarriage: Channel 4's examination of the A6 murder. *True Stories* Hanratty.

The Mystery of Deadman's Hill. In 1961, as plain Geoffrey Lane, he was junior counsel for the Crown in one of the most celebrated murder trials since the second world war.

The facts are dramatic, spelt out last night with commendable brevity and understatement which did nothing to diminish the viciousness of the act. In August 1961 the body of Michael Gregson was found by the roadside on the A6 in Bedfordshire at a spot known appropriately as Deadman's Hill. Valerie Storie, his lover, had been raped and then pumped with bullets and left for dead. In the Nineties, such a crime could soon pass from the front pages. Thirty years ago the country was shocked.

On April 4, 1962 James Hanratty, a small-time thief, was hanged at Bedford prison, convicted of the murder, the rape and the attempted murder. But did he do it? Family and campaigners have fought his corner for three decades, inspiring at least one book, countless newspaper articles, a review of the case in the Seventies and now the latest in a particular genre of television investigation.

When Lane took his seat at

Bedford it is unlikely anyone could have foreseen the power of a still infant medium. Whilst newspapers have a long, honourable history of investigation, they cannot compare with the dramatic effectiveness of the television screen, or the ability of television to reconstruct, or the time and resources that a television company can devote to a case.

Lawyers might accuse television of abandoning the complexities of a case for dangerous simplicity. Nevertheless, television has helped the successful appeals of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the trio convicted for the murder of a policeman at Broadwater Farm, and a

string of less famous cases. This time, the case does not rest on a doubtful confession or erratic forensic evidence. Hanratty was hanged on the basis of an identification by Storie and circumstantial evidence. *True Stories* rehearsed much that is known, adding some new material from police papers. Peter Alphon, the first police suspect, has confessed, as he has done twice before.

Good television though this was, did it take the case for Hanratty's innocence any further? Possibly not. But the Home Office will today find it more difficult to repulse the campaigners.

STEWART TENDLER

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Something nasty in the night cream?

Heather Kirby reports on the use of human placenta in 'anti-ageing' cosmetics, and whether it can really bring results

Oh to be wrinkle free now that spring is here. This is an innocent enough dream but it is one that occasionally forces women to ask themselves nightmarish questions: What if I have a skin condition, or, more recently: How do I feel about extracts from human placentas being used in face creams?

In order to form a sensible opinion rather than an immediate conclusion, there are a whole range of issues from ethics to efficacy which need to be considered. Reports earlier this week that placentas from abortions carried out in Russia are being used in skin care products by Roc, the French cosmetic company, are denied by M. Philippe Gerbault, the general manager and scientific director in Paris.

"There has been a big misunderstanding," he says. "We only use placenta from full-term pregnancies from French mothers and we obtain them from a French company which operates under government licence to collect the material from maternity hospitals. I don't know if women have to give their permission."

M Gerbault says that since 1938 placenta extract has been used as a treatment for burns, scars and ulcers of the skin, and that it has been used in cosmetology, for revitalising products, since the early 1960s. Although there is no law in this country which says it must, the French cosmetic company has always made a virtue of the fact it publishes all the ingredients used in its preparations.

"There are high levels of protein and enzymes in placenta which contain plasticising qualities that help with cell metabolism to stimulate their renewal," M Gerbault says. "Other companies use them but don't say so, but it would be unethical for me to say they are. Most of the placenta is used for medicine, only a small part is used for cosmetics. The material we use goes through a double sterilisation process so there is no risk of adverse skin reaction and, because the issues are compatible with human skin, they work very well."

Although M Gerbault claims

that French women have known about human placenta ingredients going into face cream for years, is disturbing news to many women in the United Kingdom. Joan Price, for many years a highly regarded writer about beauty for women's magazines, who now runs a school for beauty therapists and owns a salon in London, had no idea the "placenta extract" mentioned in Roc's small print comes from women.

'If anyone found a way to do the things claimed for these rejuvenating creams they would win a Nobel prize. It is an industry built on mystique'

"We sell most of Roc's products and I am slightly surprised to hear such ingredients are used because, in my view, the strength of the Roc range is that it is unscented, hypoallergenic and not nearly as expensive as some of the well hyped products on the market," she says. "There is hardly any difference between anti-ageing creams, most use ingredients from placentas from cows or sheep which have just given birth."

Marcelle d'Argy Smith, the editor of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, who uses Roc's products, was also surprised. "I try so hard to be politically correct and morally correct but what can we put on our faces?" she says.

In 1990, out of a total UK market of £2 billion pounds, we spent £185 million on facial skincare products, £115 million of that on moisturisers, according to

the Cosmetic, Toiletry and Perfumery Association. Women and men are seduced by the promise, if not of eternal youth, at least that a "skin energising concentrate", as Roc describes one of its rejuvenating products, will arrest or even reverse the ageing process for a while.

Part of the seduction process is the scientific language — lipoproteins, p-Hydroxybenzoates, Phenoxymethanol and the rest — employed by cosmetic companies which dermatologists dismiss as mostly mumbo-jumbo. Professor Sam Shuster, consultant dermatologist at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle, gets exasperated by the claims. "There is not a hope," he says. "If anyone found a way to do the things claimed for these rejuvenating creams they would win a Nobel prize. People use extracts of all sorts of things, monkey glands for instance, and none of them make any difference at all. It is an industry built on mystique."

Dr Andrew Griffiths, a consultant at the St John's Dermatology Institute, London, admits his profession says some harsh things about the cosmetic industry, but also acknowledges that he and his colleagues do not always help women to cope with anxieties about skin problems.

"I have now founded a group of cosmetic dermatologists who will specialise in certain areas like hair, nails and anti-ageing products, so we can give correct information to GPs," he says. "We don't want them to be rude or dismissive to patients and we want to encourage them to be more enlightened by using preparations that are more aesthetically and cosmetically acceptable. We also want to establish a two-way exchange with the cosmetic industry."

There are strict EC laws governing what substances can be used for cosmetic purposes. For instance, hormones such as oestrogen, progesterone or androgen, one of the male sex hormones, are forbidden although they can be extracted by pharmaceutical companies to make drugs such as HCG (Human Chorionic Gonadotropin), a drug



Facing the problem: but choice about the ageing process is exactly what customers cannot have

commonly used to release eggs at the appropriate time for women on assisted reproduction programmes like IVF and GIFT.

Another use of placenta is to extract immunoglobulins, used to boost the body's natural immunity system, and generally used for transplant patients.

Mr Joseph Jordan, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Birmingham Hospital for Women, says: "My understanding is that placentas from this hospital go to a British company, and are only used for medical work, for things which would be difficult to extract from elsewhere."

"Immunoglobulin is also used for rhesus negative mothers who give birth to rhesus positive babies, and for surgeons who stick needles in their fingers — which I am always doing. The danger is I might get hepatitis which can destroy the liver, so I need the boost."

A spokeswoman for the Royal College of Midwives said that unless mothers make a specific request to keep them, placentas are incinerated or stored, depending on the policy of the hospital.

Individual hospitals are autonomous in this respect. According to the college's spokeswoman, mothers do not have to give permission for their placentas to be used, although in strict legal terms it is their property. "Some bizarre mothers want to eat it, because it is purported to help prevent postnatal depression, and quite a few women want to see what it looks like," she says. "But most of them don't care what happens to it."

In this country, according to a spokeswoman at the health department, each local health authority is responsible for the correct disposal of waste products, which is what human placenta is regarded as.

Normally they are put into special paper sacks and incinerated. If they were to be used they would be put into plastic packs or bottles in a fridge and collected at intervals and taken by refrigerated truck to a factory. The material would then be reduced to a watery fluid or freeze-dried to a powder and the contents separated.

Mr David Painin, emeritus reader in obstetrics and gynaecology at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, London, and the chairman of the Birth Control Trust, says: "I am surprised that the contents of placentas are regarded as being valuable. Enzymes are very delicate and can be damaged by the wrong environment, so I would be very surprised if they can be extracted and remain effective." He, too, believes that there has not been any obligation on the part of the hospital to seek a woman's permission before disposing of the placenta. "Property rights were disregarded because it was presumed she was unlikely to want to exercise it," he says. "But if there was a commercial value, clearly women would have to be asked."

Only three of Roc's 150 products contain extracts from human placentas. They are the skin energising concentrate which costs £17.35, night cream, £18.34, and eye contour treatment gel, £13.95.

"We adhere to the same methods and controlled conditions as the pharmaceutical industry, which are far more stringent than those which are usually applied to cosmetics," one of the company's brochures says.

"When it became a little bit sensitive, we stopped all tests on animals, and now we have developed a new product, Actium, which we think is even more effective than human placenta extracts," M Gerbault says. "We will still be using the human placenta products, however, because customers like to have a choice." Ultimately, of course, choice about the ageing process is exactly what customers cannot have.

Still strangers to the easy life after two decades of "national prosperity", millions of Japan's loyal corporate workers are pushing themselves or are being pushed by their companies to work too hard.

"The Japanese have grown dangerously addicted to overwork," says Toru Sekiya, who runs one of Tokyo's 100 neuropsychiatric clinics. "Some die of it but I treat

Tech intoxicated

Some Japanese spend so many hours at work, they become addicted to overwork

those who have caught their addiction early on." In a cramped concrete surgery built next to his family home in a humdrum suburb of

greater Tokyo, Dr Sekiya treats scores of local salarymen and women.

He says his most dangerous case is that of a 26-year-old employee of an electronics firm who suffers from an extreme case of "techno-dependency". This means he is convinced that he cannot communicate with people without a computer, that he cannot live without a computer.

He spends all his waking hours either working with computers in his office or tinkering with them in his gadget-cramped room in his parents' home. "There is nothing else in this man's life. He works on Saturdays and Sundays, and is always at his desk on bank holidays," Dr Sekiya says.

He adds: "The patient stays late after work every night and he used to sleep at his office until his employers alerted me to his condition. He used to spend 365 days a year at work."

Dr Sekiya's patient believes there is no point in talking to humans because they are irrational and emotional. He feels computers are better because they are always accurate. He communicates with his office colleagues through computerised messages and is under such a degree of stress that the computer has become a kind of tranquilliser.

"He has virtually no friends," Dr Sekiya says, "but he thinks he is having a relationship with his computer."

In a country where almost every small boy can dash off a computer program, and spends his daily half-hour of spare time playing with video toy computer games, the potential for techno-stress seems considerable. While the predicament of Dr Sekiya's patient is extreme, the circumstances that produced it are common to millions of young Japanese.

"An only child, he was pushed by his parents to work very hard at school from the age of about four. He attended cramming lessons after school hours, and extra tuition courses during the holidays. In his spare time he played

with computers. He did well, entered one of the best Tokyo universities and, on graduation, joined a big firm.

The company was delighted to have such a hard-working new employee, but after a couple of years he was still refusing to take holidays and to stop working overtime. Reluctant to delegate any work, he gradually withdrew into a world of his own company in which his only companion was his technology.

Many of Dr Sekiya's patients fit a disturbing pattern. They do not drink, smoke, gamble, take any exercise or mix with their peers. Most live with their parents, but keep to themselves, inhabiting rooms filled, like airplane cockpits, with the winking red lights of computers.

Two dozen sufferers of techno-dependency can be found sleeping in Dr Sekiya's clinic every night, unable to face their parents or their wives who, they believe, do not have the slightest understanding of their problem. Manifestations of the illness come in bizarre forms.

"The Japanese are not good at smiling, and we often laugh at the wrong times," Dr Sekiya says. "Some of my patients betray their stress by smiling too much. They cannot stop smiling, and these are not natural smiles. Others go shoplifting, although they have plenty of money, and steal things they neither want nor need. Afterwards they seem to have no idea what they have done."

The number of Japanese suffering from illnesses caused by overwork has increased at least threefold in the past ten years, and although Dr Sekiya is reluctant to estimate national figures, "because many people do not realise they are suffering from techno-stress", his small overcrowded suburban clinic now has to cater for nearly 1,500 patients. It is a grim microcosm of the national problem.

The doctor, who has made a small industry out of writing books and articles on techno-stress, appears to have become as overworked as many of his patients. Asked how often he takes a holiday himself, he shakes his head and his thin lips form a smile that looks suspiciously unnatural. He is in no mood for levity. "Almost never," he says.

JOANNA PITMAN

Shot in the holiday arm

JUST as typhoid caused more casualties than Boer bullets in the South African war so hepatitis A was a major cause of serious sickness, if not so many fatalities, in the North African and Italian campaigns in the 1939-1945 war. Whereas in the past it was warriors who travelled to high-risk areas, today even greater numbers of equally vulnerable people are voluntarily transported by jumbo jet to those parts of the world where primitive sanitation and poor hygiene make hepatitis A a constant risk.

Statistics suggest that for every jumbo jet which flies to a high-risk area, and this includes some parts of the Mediterranean as well as Africa, South America and the Far East, one passenger will later develop hepatitis A. The risk of infection is multiplied about fourfold if the traveller intends to backpack rather than stay in hotels of a reasonable standard.

Protection against the disease, which attacks the liver, has been revolutionised by the introduction this week of Havrix, an anti-hepatitis A vaccine. Previously prophylaxis had been chancy although an injection of immunoglobulin, rather than painfully delivered into the buttock, gave



MEDICAL BRIEFING
Dr Thomas Stuttford

a reasonable protection for a few months.

There is already an effective vaccine against hepatitis B, a form of hepatitis usually spread by blood and other body fluids, but still no satisfactory protection against hepatitis C and D.

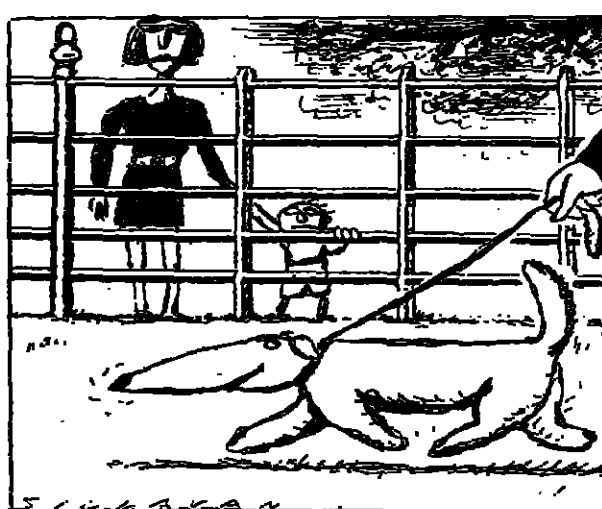
The evidence suggests that Havrix, a killed vaccine, is both safe and effective. The initial two injections are separated by two weeks and give immediate protection for about a year. This period of protection can be prolonged to ten years if a third injection is given 6-12 months later. The immunisation provided by Havrix gives as good an immunity as an actual attack of hepatitis A: antibody levels are 100 times greater than those offered by an immunoglobulin injection.

Canine grumble

PITY the candidates fighting the election in London's Kensington North. The ferocity of the political battle is as nothing compared with the anger engendered by the threats to ban free-ranging dogs in Kensington Gardens, the very place where J M Barrie made dog-walking famous.

Dog owners claim that those who demand that all dogs should be kept on a lead are motivated by emotion rather than medical statistics. The principal fear is that children will be infected by the larvae of *Toxocara canis*, parasites from dogs' intestines. Eggs of the parasite remain viable in soil, as demonstrated in samples taken from many public spaces, yet the incidence of disease in humans is very low.

Keith Butt, who has a veterinary practice in the area and looks after many of its dogs, says that results are still awaited from an analysis carried out this week of soil from Kensington Gardens, but so far as he knows no case of *Toxocara* infection in children has been traced to the gardens. As *Toxocara* is not notifiable its incidence is uncertain.



Toxocara rarely causes an acute infection, slightly less rarely a chronic granulomatous lesion in the eye in young children. The eggs of *Toxocara* can also be spread by flies to food, or by children stroking a dog. Cats too have a similar parasite, *Toxocara cati*, which receives much less publicity.

The dog lovers are supported in their opinion that the risk of infection is exaggerated by the standard textbook of British medicine. This suggests that toxocarosis offers little threat to a child's health when compared to the much greater risk of toxoplasmosis, a

different, cat-born parasite, which is particularly dangerous if caught during pregnancy. The author also says that the discovery of *Toxocara* eggs does not inevitably have adverse implications for human health.

Mr Butt concurs with this standard medical view, and recommends that bitches should be dewormed when pregnant, adult dogs dosed at least twice a year, and puppies fortnightly during their first four months. Doctors and vets alike seem to agree that this regime would do much to control toxocaral infection in children.

Harmony in Sweden

ANOTHER use of Anafranil (clomipramine) in the furtherance of domestic harmony has been reported from Sweden, where a trial has shown the drug to be effective in easing pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS).

Some years ago it was suggested that very small doses of clomipramine, a drug often used to treat depression in obsessional patients, lessened the problems of premature ejaculation when taken before sexual intercourse.

The Swedish research, analysed by *Monitor* magazine, has apparently demonstrated that women with PMS given small doses of clomipramine, 50mg daily, were twice as likely to report an improvement in depression, as well as physical symptoms, as those given a placebo.

The research workers considered that the dose was too low to achieve its effect by any antidepressant action. Even so, it was found that those patients who dropped out of the trial did so not because they did not show any improvement, which they did, but because of the side-effects associated with many of the older antidepressants.

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JOHN PITCHER



Sunny future? Sir James Mancham, deposed president of the Seychelles, will return to the islands after 15 years, with his wife, Catherine Olsen, and son, Alexander

Going back where I belong

After 15 years in political exile, Sir James Mancham, deposed president of the Seychelles, returns next week to his islands in the sun.

This will be a bizarre occasion, more in keeping with Ruritania than reality. Sir James, who anticipates a euphoric welcome from his supporters, is hoping for a reunion with President Albert René, his former prime minister and political rival, who ousted him in a coup in 1977, and who has since run the republic as a socialist state.

The last time he saw Mr René was on June 3, 1977, when the two men embraced at Mahé airport on Sir James' departure for the Commonwealth Conference in London. Two days later, Mr René had seized power.

Since then there has been an attempted counter-coup, a failed invasion by mercenaries and the assassination in London of one of Sir James' former ministers. The anti-terrorist squad uncovered a series of bugs in Sir James' home.

With such a background of political intrigue it is understandable that Mr René's apparent change of heart has come as something of a surprise.

At his elegant London house overlooking the Thames, the flamboyant 52-year-old, once regularly referred to as "the playboy president", is nonetheless in optimistic mood. "Finally I see some light at the end of the tunnel," he says. "I

believe that after 15 years of grey socialist rule, the time has come to restore to the people their former *joie de vivre*." He is still very much the president in his own home, bellowing instructions to his Seychellois staff, demanding a handkerchief, photocopies, the temporary removal of his suburban six-year-old son Alexander.

He believes that the political turnabout is the result of changes in East-West relations, the global disintegration of communism and pressure from America and France. He has played his own part, spearheading what he describes as a "fax revolution", faxing off a steady stream of messages of encouragement to his supporters in the Seychelles.

Strategically, the islands are important to both East and West. They are exactly half-way around the world from the American tracking station in Palo Alto and close to the post-Suez shipping route for oil tankers travelling daily from the Gulf States to the West.

By the time the islands became independent from British rule in 1976 there was already an American tracking station on Mahé and a military base on the smaller island of Aldabra which the British had annexed and leased to the United States. Since the decline of the Soviet Union, both Iran and India have shown interest in developing ties with the Seychelles.

Sir James, who qualified as a barrister in the Middle Temple,

Sally Brompton meets Sir James Mancham, winner of a 'fax revolution'

has always been pro-British and would have preferred integration with Britain rather than the independence forced upon the islands by the British Labour government. Now, however, there is much to be done to prepare for his return. He has registered his Democratic Party in the Seychelles with himself as its leader and "put on hold" his London-based Crusade for Democracy in Seychelles launched in 1989 with the support of 7,500 Seychellois exiles worldwide.

His first intimation of changes was in a letter from Mr René last December, which began "Dear Jim" and was signed "Albert". In which the president announced the restoration of democratic elections.

Mr René, 55, who is also a lawyer, wrote of having invited "all Seychellois currently residing overseas to return to Seychelles... and participate in the political life of the country in a responsible manner".

Since then, there have been three more letters from Mr René, the most recent arriving by fax this week agreeing to Sir James' suggestion of a meeting and wishing him

a pleasant trip back. Sir James is anxious to bury past grievances for the sake of the future of the islands. In a recent letter to Mr René he referred to them both as victims of "external politics and our own lack of maturity".

The actual election process has still to be finalised. Sir James would like to see the procedure laid down by an outside body rather than by Mr René. "I believe that if there was a free and fair democratic election tomorrow my party would win a resounding majority of votes," he says.

A peace-loving bon vivant much given to philosophical homilies of the "a wise mackerel will keep his distance from any shark" variety, Sir James will be accompanied on his two-week visit by his second wife, Catherine Olsen, the Australian journalist whom he met when she interviewed him, and his son.

While Lady Mancham worries about the safety of the trip (Sir James is organising his own security force of about 20 men), her husband is planning his strategy in conjunction with the 100 or so other exiles who will be accompanying him, including his former ministers for finance and tourism.

His first task on arriving on Mahé — the largest of the 115 islands — will include a visit to the graves of his mother and two younger brothers who died in his absence. His former home, built by his late father, a prosperous businessman, was confiscated by the

new regime and allowed to fall into disrepair. Other family land has also been confiscated.

Sir James insists that he had nothing to do with the failed 1981 invasion of the Seychelles by 44 mercenaries led by Mike Hoare. Pretending to be members of a charitable drinking club known as Ye Ancient Order of Froth Blowers, the mercenaries were exposed when customs officers discovered an illegal bunch of bananas among their luggage. Searching for more illicit fruit in the hand baggage they found instead AK47 assault rifles.

Hoare was subsequently sentenced to ten years imprisonment and Sir James' former chief immigration officer, Gerard Hoareau, a leader of the British-based resistance movement, was shot dead outside his London home.

When Sir James later discovered that one of his employees was a spy for Mr René he was philosophical. "I felt his presence could have been beneficial because it would have made René realise I was not involved in forcible combat," he explains. "Otherwise I might have been the one assassinated."

In his exile, Sir James has achieved legendary status among his supporters in the Seychelles who, he says, include most of the young. If there is a desire to have him back it is because, he says, "The people know I was dedicated to the welfare of the country and the best interests of the nation".

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The belugas and the boffin

A Russian scientist says his escaped belugas are symbols of peace, not war

The Russian professor whose lost beluga whales have caused a furore among conservationists, and incidentally left the Turkish government in a diplomatic quandary, has appealed to the world to let him have his whales back.

Professor Vladimir Akhutin, the head of the St Petersburg Institute for Research and Development of Biotechnical Systems, has rejected charges that the belugas were being trained for kamikaze attacks on enemy submarines, and described for the first time their place in his ambitious plans to create the world's largest centre for marine ecological studies. "The belugas were trained, but for peaceful purposes," he says.

Meanwhile, one or both of the whales are apparently still roaming the coast of northern Turkey, 300 miles from the research station near Sevastopol from which they escaped in October, after a storm. The Russians want them back, local fishermen want them to stay in Turkey, and British whale lovers are campaigning to repatriate them to their icy native waters in the Sea of Okhotsk, 5,000 miles away.

Experts in international law have declared that the Russians lost their legal right of ownership when the whales cruised into Turkish territorial waters.

Greenpeace International has warned that repatriation to the Arctic might disastrously infect the belugas' birthplace with germs and parasites picked up in the Black Sea. There are also fears that the whales, christened Aydin and Ali by the fishermen who have claimed them as mascots might not survive the pollution and relatively mild temperatures of Turkish waters in summer.

An almost nostalgic cold war slant has been given to the story by media claims that the whales were "almost certainly" being trained by the Russians to track and attack enemy submarines or divers. Dolphins were reportedly trained by the United States in the 1960s to attach limpet mines to ships and stab Vietnamese divers with syringes of fatal gas.

The institute's work could be an innocent spin-off from earlier, more sinister, research. Its research station is apparently 40 miles or more from the base in the Crimea which is said to have been the centre for naval experiments with cetaceans.

The controversy is a disarming setback to the institute at a crucial moment for its fortunes.

For months, Professor Akhutin has been quietly negotiating in the West to secure hard currency backing for a proposed marine ecology complex. Now his project finds itself in an unwelcome limelight, accused of a shady exploitation of wildlife.

"It is quite untrue that our college has any military purpose," Professor Akhutin says. "This is a story which has got about because our Sevastopol laboratory is near to defence installations and the naval base of the Black Sea fleet. Our purpose is to launch a great international programme of ecology. We will study sea animals of all kinds and man's impact on the sea, and seek solutions to the problems of pollution and conservation."

While admitting that the whales were trained, Professor Akhutin is clearly rather baffled by the furore his belugas have aroused. He insists that they were well cared for. His institute is said to have about 40 cetaceans at Sevastopol, and to have acquired the belugas seven years ago.

"Some people say this whale should stay in Turkey, for children and others to play with," he says.

(Still unconvinced by reports that both lost whales have made their way to Turkey, he speaks of only one.) "But I have bought this animal, and now I need to use her. She cost 90,000 roubles [then officially worth about £90,000]. We have trained her to co-operate with us. Belugas are very easy to work with once they are trained, but it takes time — the man must look at the beluga, and the beluga must look at the man, and they swim around together and get used to each other."

The training programme has both research and practical objectives, Professor Akhutin says. "We have devices for measuring their pulse, their temperature and many other parameters. Psychologists from an institute in Kiev are helping with our studies of their behaviour. We also study how man and whale can work together in the exploration of the sea-bed, and in finding mineral deposits such as manganese. These activities are fun for the animals and their trainers."

Professor Akhutin is confident that the whales could be trained to search the sea-bed, under television surveillance, or perhaps carrying television cameras, and guide ships to mineral deposits. Beluga training is only a small part of the institute's ambitious programme. Plans have been discussed with marine academics in Germany, Greece, Italy and America. Professor Akhutin was in London recently, meeting MPs to explore the possibility of British government backing.

Christened "Man and the Sea", Professor Akhutin's project is spectacular in scale and scope, based on a complex of buildings a kilometre long — comparable to Canary Wharf, in London's Docklands in the extent of their ground plan. The complex would include laboratories, a conference centre, and extensive research facilities, including warm tanks in which even



Help: diver Ray Gravnor feeds Aydin

Are women's issues being overlooked in a 'macho and bad-tempered' election campaign?

Cold-shouldered again

Although there is mention of women's priorities in the party manifestos, only the issues of child benefit and nursery education have received any real coverage in the torrent of reportage of this election campaign. It makes one wonder how much politicians and commentators care about the views of 52 per cent of the electorate. It is as if they are all colluding in ensuring women's voices are not heard: again and again we see male politicians being interviewed by male reporters. In what is becoming an increasingly macho and bad-tempered campaign where the real issues get drowned in a sea of mutual insults.

Women started with high hopes of this election. For several years we have been told how demographic changes would increase our opportunities and ensure that our contribution to wider society, as well as the home, would be recognised. In practice, women still earn only two-

thirds of the average man's wage more than 20 years after the first Equal Pay Act was passed, and our representation in all areas of public life remains, in Lady Howe's words, "wholly unacceptable in a modern democracy".

Yet these issues were beginning to be discussed: John Major might not have had women in his cabinet but he did launch Opportunity 2000, and his party produced *A Britain without Barriers: The Conservative Record for Women*. The Labour party meanwhile wooed women with its proposed Ministry for Women with detailed proposals for Putting Equality into Practice and Claire Rayner tackling working women's problems in a magazine-style *Women Today*. Paddy Ashdown commissioned a group of

prominent Liberal Democrat women to produce *Unlocking the Door*, ambitious proposals "to liberate the economic potential of women".

We were becoming more confident in our abilities to come together across party barriers. We had some notable successes lobbying led to the removal of taxation on workplace nursery places; the payment of the invalidity care allowance to married women; moves towards equality in taxation, pensions and retirement ages; and the saving and index-linking of child benefit.

The 214-member organisations of the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO) include such diverse groups as the Mothers' Union, the National Pay

Equity Campaign, professional women's groups, local rape crisis centres, black women's groups, rural groups, plus the women's committees of all the main political parties.

The ten points of our *Agenda for Women: A New Deal for the Nineties*, launched in December 1990, cover the economy and employment, environment, education and training, family, health, public life, images of women, violence, housing and international issues.

NAWO's broad priorities have been extended by the Equal Opportunities Commission's *Equality Agenda*, by the *Election Agenda* produced by the Business and Professional Women, by the Fawcett Society's policy proposals

for equal citizenship, and by the programme for action produced by the seven key organisations which make up the Childcare Umbrella.

Instead of addressing these issues, election commentators obsessively cross-examine male politicians on the issue of the burden of taxation which will or will not fall on middle managers, an academic point to most women.

"We can do better than this. Is it too much to hope that in the few days that remain of the campaign both the media and the politicians stop slinging mud at each other and concentrate on things that really matter? A priority for NAWO in the next four years must be to ensure that never again is the majority of the electorate so outrageously ignored."

JANE GRANT

Jane Grant is Director of the National Alliance of Women's Organisations

TIMES/HILTON SPECIAL OFFER

A luxury hotel break at half the price

READERS can save up to 50 per cent on a Hilton weekend break in Britain, and get two nights for the price of one on the Continent, simply by collecting five of the six differently numbered tokens printed in *The Times* every day this week.

When you have collected five tokens, you can make a reservation by telephone. Lists of participating hotels were printed on Monday, and will be repeated tomorrow, with a booking form.

To book at one of the 35 hotels in Britain (25 or 50 per cent off), call Hilton Central Reservations on 0923 244400 (ref T1 92). For one of 29 hotels in 12 other countries (two nights for the price of one), call 081-780 1155 (ref T1 Europe). The offer is available from April 4 until September 9.

For example, a two-night weekend at

the London Olympia Hilton would usually cost a guest £120, but with the help of *The Times* tokens you need pay only £60. A two-night weekend at the Hilton National Edinburgh would cost you £70 instead of £140. Hotels offering a 25 per cent discount include the Hilton on Park Lane, where a two-night weekend would cost you £127.50 — a saving of £42.50. At the Linton Lodge, Oxford your

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Cut out and keep the token on the right. The sixth and final differently numbered token will appear in the Life and Times section of *The Times* tomorrow, together with Hilton hotel listings in Britain and on the Continent. There will also be full booking details.

two-night stay would cost £81 — a saving of £27.

On the Continent, two nights at the Rome Cavalieri Hilton would cost £107 instead of £214. Or, you might choose to visit the Vienna Hilton for a cultural weekend: £91 instead of £176. Remember that saving for a couple taking a weekend break would be double. Wherever you choose to go take advantage of this *Times* offer and enjoy the good life to be had at a Hilton hotel at up to half the price.

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Times remembered: the poet Ted Walker says "the eternal problem of what to do about being bereft of one's life partner is ignored"

well present in for sympathy is a power exerted over the mourner by persons who do not always understand how deeply they have been corrupted by it. They have, however, unwittingly, an emotional stake in your continuing unhappiness. You want, he says "to feel the sympathy, but not necessarily have it expressed. An impossible desire, perhaps, but poetry and therapy. M. Walker and Mrs Rose have used their several sadnesses to provide, at least, an outline map of a dark country. It is happy to record that both have now remarried.

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LIFE & TIMES FRIDAY APRIL 3 1992

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Channel 4 Daily (8303222)

9.25 Film: The Camels are Coming (1934, b/w) starring Jack Hulbert. Vintage comedy about a squadron leader on the trail of drug traffickers in Egypt. Directed by Tim Whelan (3506357)

10.45 Smithy Square (8303222) **10.55** Smithy Square (8303222)

11.00 Kingdoms of the East: The Last Round Up. A visit to Asmara to witness the art of catching wild elephants (T). (Teletext) (17816)

12.00 Moelch's Ark. The world of the blue-faced booby, a fishing bird of the Galapagos Islands (T). (Teletext) (17816)

12.30 Business Daily (41057) **1.00** Sesame Street Jr. (39222)

2.00 Love Lucy (b.w). Comedy series starring Lucille Ball (3357)

2.30 Film: For Valour (1937, b/w). A force starting Tom Walls and Ralph Lynn in the roles of a cockney and a fastidious aristocrat who meet over crooked son and grandson. Directed by Tom Walls (1518406)

4.10 Pieter Breughel. A documentary about medieval everyday life in Belgium as depicted by the 16th-century Flemish painter Pieter Breughel (2074474) **4.45** One Fast Moving quip (15)

5.00 Cutting Edge: Summerhill at 70. A documentary portrait of the unorthodox mixed boarding school in Suffolk. (T) (3116)

6.00 Star Chamber. Norman Tebbit is the computer's last subject of the hour (T) (3116)

6.30 Tonight with Jonathan Ross. In Los Angeles, Ross welcomes Sharon Stone, Demi Moore and David Hasselhoff (32)

7.00 Channel 4 News with Jon Snow and Fiona Murray. Includes reaction to the election campaign by 100 voting writers. (Teletext) (17816) **7.30** Channel 4 News with Jon Snow and Fiona Murray. Includes short discussion election issues (137448)

8.00 Brookside. Jackie Dixon, avowing to be accepted as one of the gang, is trapped in the blazing primary school set alight by her vandal boyfriend, Darren. Starring Alexandra Fletcher and Matthew Crompton. (Teletext) (s) (25593)

9.30 Short Stories: Plane Scared. **THE CHOICE** is a choice of fates, flying is the fourth most common fear in Britain after snakes, heights and storms and ranks equal with a trip to the dentist. Not many people may know that British Airways, presumably anxious not to lose potential business, runs a fear of flying course. It lasts a day. Costs £120 and includes a short flight to the English coast by tidal. Gill Brown's film follows some of the reluctant fliers that try to overcome their nerves. No one pretending the course is a cure. The most it claims is helping people to cope better. For one woman, already worried about a holiday flight nine months ahead, the dress rehearsal is a palpable ordeal. She is convinced the plane will crash and even when it doesn't she is too nervous to reach the airport. (Teletext) (s) (61319)

9.00 Cheers. The busy ladies from the patrons and staff of the celebrated Boston watering house. (Teletext) (s) (61319)

9.30 Flowering Passions. Anna Pavlova tells Tony Braccigale as he struggles to create the perfect rose (r). (Teletext) (21203)

10.00 Roseanne. Blue-collar comedy. (Teletext) (s) (90845)

10.30 Whose Line Is It Anyway? Clive Anderson, in New York, is joined by, among others, by Ryan Stiles and Chad Eskin (s) (98703)

11.00 An Audience with Victoria Wood (r) (88661)

11.00 Midnighting Soap. (Teletext) (s) (98703)

2.00am Tonight with Jonathan Ross. As 6.30pm (s) (73297)

2.30 Star Chamber. As 6.00pm (52704). Ends at 3.00

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The numbers now appearing next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes – numbers which allow you to instantly programme your video recorder with a VideoPlus+ listing. You can use VideoPlus+ to programme 720 in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. For more details call VideoPlus on 0839 121204 (calls charged at 48p per minute plus 36p off-peak) or write to VideoPlus+, VTM Ltd, 77 Fuhnam, Palace Road, London W6 8JA. VideoPlus+™, Pluscode™ and Video Programmer are trademarks of Genstar Marketing Ltd.

and Friends (8664)
The Ten (5748)

the Fatman (6459384) 3.00
ChenAttractions (71728) 3.30 Night Beat
(6182764) 4.25-5.30 Film: Block Busters
(6675920)

TVS
The Simpsons episode 2:28pm Van Cleave
(7777777) 2.30-3.15 Corning of Age
(9524342) 2.30-3.35 Sons and Daughters
(592135) 3.00-3.30 Cops to Cops (60146)
The Simpsons episode 3:00pm
The Simpsons episode of the Mind (25947) 12.25
Married...with Children 12.30-1.15
television.

TVYNE TONES
The Simpsons episode 2:28pm 1.15 Grissom
in London (6459384) 3.00 Northern Line (68
6.25-5.5 The Travel Magazine (645796) 3.00
Beauty and the Beast (634135) 11.40-11.55
The Simpsons episode 7:00pm
the Fatman (6459384) 3.00

54C.
Star Trek: Voyager (41 Daily) (8303227) 8.30
Film: The Carpenters and Company (250357)
10.45 Pete Smith's (5069319) 11.00 Seaside
Star Trek (17818) 12.00 North's Art (69116)
The Simpsons episode 3:00pm
Meltrin (1657796) 1.00 Countdown
(5523796) 1.45 Business Daily (4087151) 2.15
Sign On (407596) 2.45 Film: The Adventures
of Tom Sawyer (66624) 3.00
Well Done (5927654) 4.25 3.57 3.57
(3272777) 5.00 Short Stories (4609) 5.30
Brooklyn (617) 6.00 The Simpsons (66624)
6.15 News (55524) 7.00 Robi Polvi's Cym
(4680) 7.30 Yvonne Chawara (1160 8.00 Cym
Glad (2553) 8.30 Newyddion (2629) 9.00
The Simpsons episode 3:00pm
(8185757) 9.45 A TV Drama (2953539) 10.00
Roseanne (50846) 10.00 Whistle Line (1)
The Simpsons episode 3:00pm
(88661) 12.00 Midnight. Special (55742)

RTE 1

3.00 Stereo on FM.
3.55AM Shipping
3.00 News, Ind 6.03 Weather
3.10 Sermon
3.25 Prayer for the Day
3.30 Today, Ind 7.00-7.30 8.00
8.30 News 6.55, 7.55 Weather
7.48 Thought for the Day
8.53 Party Election Broadcasts by the
Natural Law party
9.00 News
9.09 Call session with Kenneth
Clarke, education secretary

Irish Masters Snooker and Racing from
Antree 9.35(9.35-9.59) 9.00 News (21.48-22.01)
9.30 The Late Late Show (9.59-10.27) 11.55
News (10.07-11.35), followed by some of
the *Cime*

RADIO 4

3.00 Special Assignment (FM
only): BBC correspondents
report on the main topics in
this week's world news
3.30 bookshelf (FM only) features
the disturbing work of Edgar
Allen Poe (S)
4.00 News
4.05 Kaleidoscope: Tim Marlow
views an exhibition which
displays the art of Pompeii and
Italians respond to the recent
programming about folk arts

0.00-0.10 Carry on Up the Wall (LW only):
Zelig, narrated by David
Dorwin; directed by David
Dorwin. On the BBC
National Archive; the radio
adaptation of *Pass of the
Muhammad*, a musical
version of *Les Misérables*,
opening in Nottingham; the
rescue of Elizabeth
Barnard; the rescue of
Hillier's *The Art of Learning* (s)
4.45 Short Story: In the Wake of
the Storm, by Henry James
Bosman. Read by Jack Klaff (s)
5.00 PM with Frank Partridge and
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Going Places: Transport
magazine with Janet Trewhin
7.05 The Archers
7.20 Woman's Hour (LW only)
7.25 The Archers (LW only)
8.05 Any Questions? On tonight
with the host, John
Malcolm Rifford, John
Said, leader of the
National Party, and
David Steel

30	The Natural History Programme (FM only): Presented by Jessica Horn	5.15 Kaleidoscope (r) (a)	11.00 News
5.00	20 Years with John Howard	5.45 Letterbox from Australia by Astrid Cooke (r)	11.05 Week Ending : A satirical look at the week's news, with Wailers, David Yates, Sam Giddens and others
5.25pm	The Food Programme (FM only): Cooking	10.00 The World Tonight with Richard Kershaw (s) (r)	
5.30	The World at One : The latest news and the overseas coverage presented by James Clouston and Nick Clarke (LW only from 1.40pm)	10.45 A Book at Bedtime : Lord John Peel reads a story by Pamela Sellers (LW only) of the wartime adventures of Jo Williams	
5.45	Country Shoppers (FM only) (r)	11.00 News	
5.50	Classic Series : <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>		

Episodes dramatizing Thomas Hardy's classic novel *Tess* 11:30
 10:00-11:00 Campaign Report (LW only) Election Platform
 12:00 News, Inc. 12:27 Weather
 12:33 Shipping Forecast 1
 World Service (LW only)

REQUENCIES: Radio 1: 105.3kHz/285m; 108.9kHz/275m; FM-97.6-99.8, Rai
 FM-88.9-92.2, Radio 3: FM-90.2-92.4, Radio 4: 198kHz/1515m; FM-9
 6. Radio 5: 693kHz/433m; 90.9kHz/330m; LBC: 1152kHz/261m; FM 9
 7: 1548kHz/194m; FM 95.8. GLR: 1458kHz/206m; FM 94.9, W
 1648kHz/164m

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